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UGANDA FOR A HOLIDAY

MARKET PLACE, MUANSA.

[*See* page 184.

UGANDA
FOR A HOLIDAY

BY

SIR FREDERICK TREVES, Bart.

G.C.V.O., C.B., LL.D.

SERJEANT SURGEON TO H.M. THE KING

SURGEON IN ORDINARY TO H.M. QUEEN ALEXANDRA

AUTHOR OF

'THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LANTERN' 'THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP' ETC.

WITH SEVENTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR
AND A MAP

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PREFACE

THERE exists already a library of books of no mean proportions concerned with Uganda and British East Africa. In these works the countries are contemplated in a very satisfying way, from the points of view of the naturalist, the big-game hunter, the colonist, and the missionary. If among them there be no volume which regards this part of Africa from the outlook of the unspecialised traveller, of the man who merely seeks 'somewhere to go to,' then that small gap in the shelf the present volume would aim at filling.

FREDERICK TREVES.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE,
RICHMOND PARK, SURREY,
August 1910.

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* The illustration on the cover is a reproduction of a bracelet showing the ancient blue beads met with among the Kavirondo natives, of which a description will be found on page 161.

UGANDA FOR A HOLIDAY

CHAPTER I

THE LYONS MAIL

THERE is a happy vagueness in the minds of many as to Uganda. With such it is one of the countries of that mystic geography of Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver where around a name are gathered some sort of a coast, a palm beach with canoes, appropriate huts, and people wearing feathers. It may with the less precise be merely a place without form and void, where 'things' come from, and from whence zoological items are supplied. These indefinite lands, whether attached to such names as Senegambia, Uganda, Galapagos or Kuria Muria are a labour-saving possession for those who prefer the unexacting guide of the imagination to the fatiguing statements of a gazetteer. To these geographers Uganda is but a land of Punt whither go the extremists in travel and where are to be seen exceptional forms of life. To others, of course, it is a place more clearly delineated; for one gentleman told me, with the easy confidence of an expert, that it was situated in Egypt, and was a

country much troubled by flies. To the still better informed Uganda is a district in familiar association with the equator where the inhabitants die of sleeping sickness, where the murder of a missionary is commonplace, and where lions, in a state of nature, can be seen from a railway-carriage window. Even to such, the critic—while allowing the items of the equator and the sickness—would assert that there is no railway in Uganda, that the lion no longer seeks its prey in the track of the 'cow catcher,' and that the missionaries of the country live in great security and contentment.

Yet Uganda is even more wonderful in fact than in fiction. A disciple of the Robinson Crusoe school might believe in a sweltering island where a castaway was constrained to clothe himself in furs, but he would not credit that in a land of small limits, lying under the equator, there are miles of perpetual snow as well as jungles stifling with heat, glaciers of tumbled ice and the flora of Ceylon, a lake the size of Scotland yet lifted almost as near to heaven as the summit of Ben Nevis, a plateau as luxuriant as a garden of Araby and yet blooming many thousand feet above the level of the sea, a people who until a few short years ago lived as lived the folk of the bronze age, and yet who now have a penny postage and some familiarity with motor cars.

There is, moreover, no little haziness of mind as to the distinctions which separate Uganda from British East Africa. The Uganda railway is limited, from its first sleeper to its last, to British East Africa. British East Africa has absorbed a section of Uganda. Many books, the present one included, in professing to deal

with Uganda are concerned largely with the neighbouring Protectorate. In the matter of travel, British East Africa is the means and Uganda the end; the one forms the base of the pyramid, the other the pinnacle. It is impossible indeed in this connection not to be reminded of a character in one of Besant's romances whose name among her intimates was 'Polly-which-is-Marla.' By a similar method of nomenclature this part of the tropics might as well be called 'Uganda which is British East Africa.'

The best route from London to this country of anomalies is by way of Marseilles, and it is a little unexpected that the first place of note passed on the road to Central Africa should be Canterbury. There are wild heaths and desert moorlands in England which might seem appropriate as starting-places, but the slumbering cathedral town, beloved of Chaucer and his garrulous pilgrims, appears by some vague reasoning to be out of place. After Canterbury come Dover and the sea. Then Paris, and finally that most familiar yet most wonderful journey—the flight at night across the wide continent to the Mediterranean.

Although thousands have made this transit many times, there must be few who fail to realise its uncommon fascination. Under the dark vault of the Lyons station stands the train, like an iron bolt about to be shot out into the night. It seems larger, heavier, blacker, and less like a string of coaches than are other trains, being rather a jointed metal cylinder into the vents of which hurried folk are climbing.

It is not until the lights of Paris have long vanished

and the clocks have struck the hour of midnight that the full sense of this frantic career across the great arm of Europe is appreciated. The train rushes through the night, rocking and writhing like a vertebrated creature. The panting of its breath is heard far ahead; the glare from its mouth makes red the black embankment as it plunges past; showers of ash rattle on its metal back; a comet-like tail of dust and smoke clings to its wake; from beneath it comes a pattering roar as of a million feet; within is the creaking of its overstrained ribs; while through its whole twisting length is to be felt such a throbbing as must shake the heart of a hunted beast.

It holds to a narrow track through slumbering towns with lamplit streets, across dumb meadows, through affrighted woods, under the walls of ancient castles, and by the gardens of crouching cottages.

It is the embodiment of the Demon of Nightmare tearing its way across a country of dreams. It passes through the drowsy quiet like a string of midnight revellers brawling arm-in-arm along a silent lane. As it speeds its vanishing howl must fall on many a startled ear, and must leave on many a pillow the uneasy heads and tossing arms of those upon the stillness of whose slumbers it has crashed.

Within the iron shell of this emblem of unrest are men and women, semi-clad, who, hot, damp, and deafened, are rocked to and fro on unsteady beds, sleeping by feverish snatches in a kind of recurring delirium. They wake to see spokes of light rotate upon the ceiling as the carriage whirls through a lighted town. The flicker

reveals lank garments swinging to and fro from hooks, as if they were bodies in a Bluebeard's cupboard. They hear as they pass beneath bridges a clatter of malediction from the echoing stones. They listen to fragments of ghostly talk as the train halts for a dazed moment at some place of call. They dream, they toss, they ache, they moan. They pray when awake for one moment's quiet, and awake in panic when that moment comes.

At last the day breaks. A blind is thrown up; the glare falls upon a table where the coffee cup that has rattled all night is seen covered with crisp, black dust, which same furnace ash has buried the stained hotel bill upon which the cup is resting. The change is as sudden as the passage from a cavern into the sunshine. Where were the shadowy buildings and myriad lights of Paris are now a green country, a small yellow cottage with a pink-grey roof of rounded tiles, a placard of vivid blue on its wall, a row of cypresses along its garden path and an old woman driving geese into a field. The land is covered with unwonted vegetation, with vineyards and olive groves, with cactus and mimosa. A bridge spans a loitering stream, while a long straight road, dotted by a goatherd and a flock of goats, leads away to distant hills. It is a new world and a placid one; it is sanity after an interlude of delirium.

The old woman with the geese and the goatherd are pleasant folk to contemplate after the violent night. The fever of the express has never troubled their restful souls. They live by the side of the iron road with as little concern in its affairs as a couple of rabbits

within sight of a gun factory. The utmost boundaries of their world are the purple hills. Their hearts are in tune with the dawdling stream and not with the frantic mail. They may know nothing of empires beyond the seas, but are familiar with every plant and bird and living thing within their ken. She of the geese could chatter of great ambitions in connection with pigs, and could tell the tumbled folk in the *Lits Salons* more about the olive tree than the curator at Kew. He of the pattering flock could reveal mysteries about the pasturage for goats as curious as anything the traveller may know of the hotels at Athens or Peru. You tear along to Central Africa; he strolls to the hillside that marks the limit of his day. Your thoughts are full of custom dues and luggage cares or of anxiety about steamer connections at Aden; his thoughts, as he follows the goats, are absorbed by the regrettable emptying of a wine barrel and by the glories of a new pair of boots he will wear when next he struts to Mass. Thus for a second they meet, the man who knows the world as seen from the windows of the *Rapide,* and the man who knows a little part of it as a monk knows a much thumbed missal.

When Marseilles is reached there ensues a disorderly scurry from the station to the quay, of the circumstances of which very few reliable details remain in the memory. So confused is the abrupt stampede that the episode flits across the mind with the dimness of a cinematograph picture revolving at too great a speed. There is a subconscious appreciation of rabble in a custom house, of clamouring people pressing round a counter with

the eagerness of famine folk seeking food. There may be some memory of a crumpled woman shaking a bunch of keys over one's shoulder, of a pale man before an unopened trunk crying 'Nong,' or of a girl gasping with alarm as a leviathan hand and arm are thrust into the depths of her portmanteau among precious chiffons and tender linen. A firmer impression remains of an impassive being who makes chalk marks on one's earthly goods as if he were St. Peter at the Gate, signing passes to Paradise.

Following this are broken details connected with a cab, the driver of which has the back of his tweed coat patched with a square of drab flannel, but whether he is driving a horse or a camel does not transpire. Then, like features in a fogged negative, come impressions of streets—not of particular streets, but of streets in the abstract, a conception of blurred inhabitants, the only clear figure being that of a small girl in red socks carrying a cat, a realisation of tram lines that throw the cab about, a track of coal dust scented with garbage, landing stages in line like the black keys of a piano, ships' masts as thick as the hairs of a brush, a bowsprit athwart the road that just escapes the driver's head, a whiff of foul water, a medley of cranes and sacks, and finally the side of the ship, standing up like the wall of a city, over the battlements of which people in jaunty clothes look down upon the ledge of vegetable-bespattered mud which leads to the gangway.

CHAPTER II

THE SHIP OF GOOD HOPE

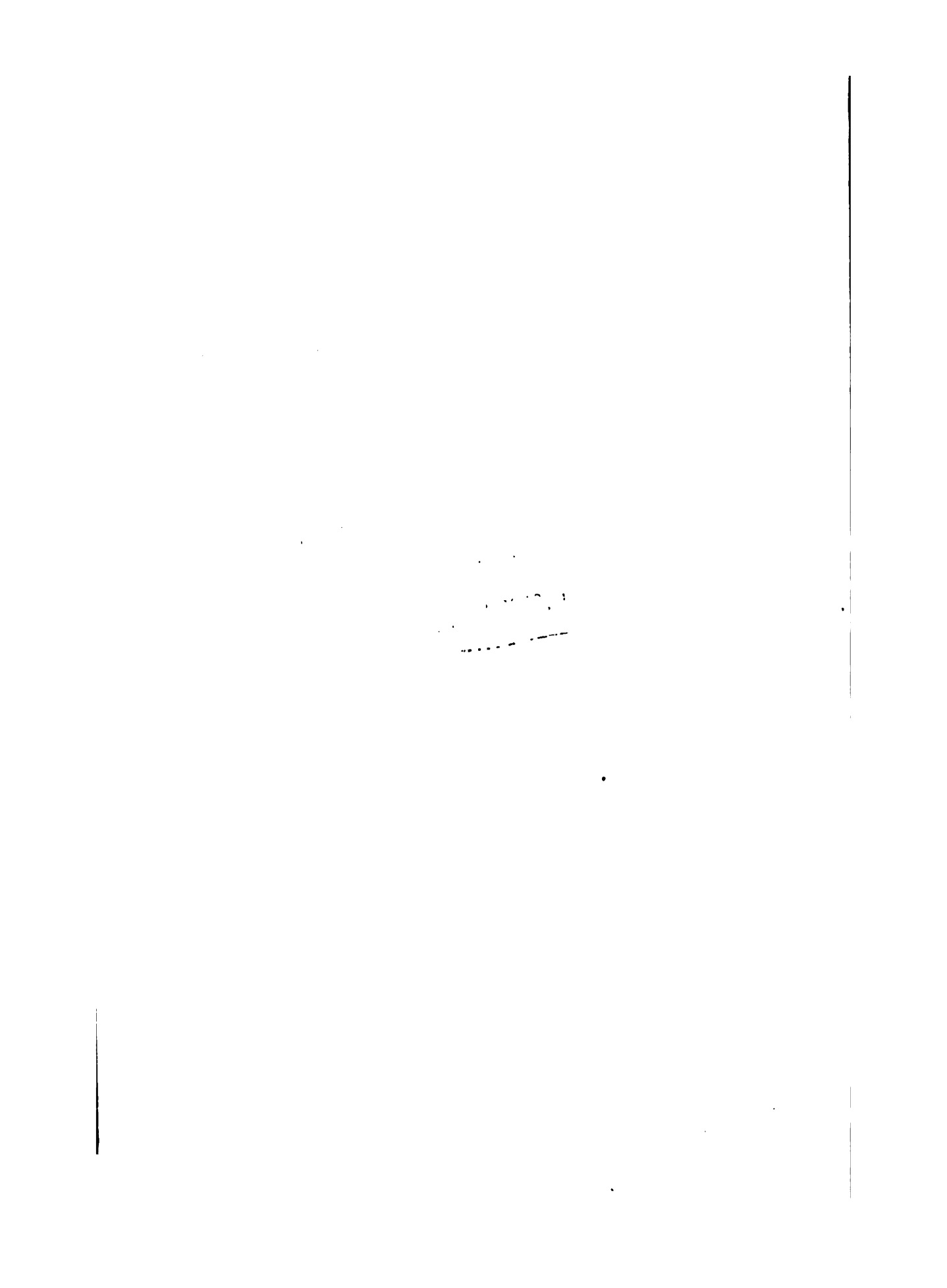
THE steamer that is so incontinently boarded at Marseilles has already come from Hamburg, having looked in at Southampton on its passage. From the French port it shapes its course south through the straits of Bonifacio to Naples to pick up the German mails, together with certain cargo, and to coal. Thence it goes by Stromboli and the ruined cities of Messina and Reggio to the east coast of Africa by way of the Suez Canal. Although the majority of the passengers are English, the ship is German, an anomaly which is counterbalanced by the fact that the vessel is exceptionally comfortable and well found. Her berthing list is full, while the passengers form possibly as interesting a company of human beings as is likely to be met with on the high seas.

They are for the most part men, and young, and are bound for those new colonies which both England and Germany are founding along the eastern flank of Africa—Africa being one of the few parts of the world yet left open to the adventurer. The larger number of these travellers are men of action, whose strong hands are the hands of those who make new countries and cut

STROMBOLI.

OLD MOSQUE, MOMBASA.

[See page 42.



the first passage through the wood. Some, returning from a holiday, have already landed from their *Mayflower* and have been long on the trail. As these old hands doze in their deck chairs, with an expiring cigarette between their fingers, there must come back to them the memory of foot-weary marches, of the camp fire in the bush, of times of privation, when water-bottles were dry and meat tins empty, and when, above all, the last pinch of tobacco dust had vanished into smoke.

There are lads, too, who have their spurs to win, lads with short cropped hair, whose muscles have been made strong in the cricket-field and on stretches of the river. They gather in the smoking-room at night and listen to the talk of the elder men, just as open-mouthed boys listen to tales told by the Christmas fire. They have come from home at the call of that Pied Piper whose tune is of the East, of the great forest, of the untravelled plain, of the land of strange beasts and of hidden fortune. They follow the piping, as did the children in the streets of Hamelin, without question or misgivings. It is the oldest tune that has ever made tingle the feet of youth. It drew away the lads of England in the days of Elizabeth, and it draws them still.

There are colonial officials of divers types who tell generally of familiar dealings in unfamiliar quarters of the world, of masterful business with natives, of unclerk-like work done in offices under the buzz of electric fans, and of far-off stations which are little more than oases in the desert. These are the men who make roads, who drain swamps, who build bridges, who are wise in the mysteries of cotton and rubber, who battle with

plague, pestilence, and famine, who write out official reports with home-made ink, and incidentally fight with wild beasts at Ephesus. They talk of many things —of the new tennis court in the Seychelles, of trekking in Nyassaland, of the rent of bungalows in Sierra Leone, or the price of whisky on the Zambesi, and discuss these matters in the same way as tamer folk chatter of Bond Street, of cheap tickets to Eastbourne, and of the merits of hotels at Lucerne.

Then there are merchant adventurers who are led by the same spirit that fired the men of the Arab dhows in ancient days. They come neither from Bagdad nor Muskat by the Persian Gulf, but from London or Berlin. They are concerned no longer with ivory or slaves, but are attracted by Elysian fields of coffee or fibre, by plains covered with flocks and herds, or by a handful of black dust speckled with gold. Last of all, fresh from the city pavement, is the would-be big game hunter with his small-bore talk. Although his mental survey could be apparently compressed into the compass of a cartridge case, his ambition at least is expansile.

It was a remarkable feature of this sturdy company that they were all possessed by unquenchable hope. None seemed to be apprehensive nor to harbour any thought that allowed the possibility of failure.

From the financier who was staking sterling gold upon the roulette table of the African wilderness to the subaltern who was hurrying to join a native regiment, all were convinced that they were the favourites of fortune, that their chance had come, and that they were embarked in fact upon the Ship of Good Hope.

Among this confident band was a little German lady, some twenty years of age, who was accompanying her husband to the African hinterland. She had been married but a few weeks, and had still ringing in her ears the hearty send-off of her friends at the railway station and the sobs of her mother and sister. She was just a pretty, grey-eyed schoolgirl, much concerned for the moment in the despatching of postcards at each port; but she was bound to a settlement some three weeks' march from the coast, where she would find herself the only white woman among a horde of blacks. She was still much engrossed with the episodes of her wedding, with her many adorable frocks and enviable hats. She was as sweet and dainty as a Watteau shepherdess, yet her home was to be in a raw outpost where life was little advanced beyond the camp stool and tin mug period. It was a matter of wonder how her delicate embroideries and fragile laces would fare in the forest, and how the little silver bag that held her film of a handkerchief, her purse, and her scent bottle would serve when she was bivouacking for the night on the way to her new home. She could rough it, she said, but she must have all her pretty things with her, for they were so comforting.

She too trod the deck of the Ship of Good Hope, and indeed danced along its boards. The prospect of her life filled her with unquestioning joy. She was proud because she was helping in a proud essay. In her tiny footsteps, in years to come, would follow happy wives and mothers, who would find a town where she had found a bush clearing. This little schoolgirl pioneer

was the delight of the ship. She was a kind of comrade of whom the old hands had no knowledge. They smiled at her chatter but adored her courage. They chuckled to think of the small white shoes and the trim silk stockings on roads of which they knew, but felt a lump rising in their throats as they pictured the gallant little maid when months of an African sun had sapped the beauty of her cheek and had drawn a shadow across the merry grey eyes, and when, it may be, the tiny lace handkerchief would be crumpled up in a fevered hand and the head that tossed on a hot pillow would look strangely old.

CHAPTER III

THE FAG END OF THE WORLD

ADEN is reached at night at an hour so late that little can be seen of the place but the lights of the town. The steamer with ponderous dignity comes to a standstill. The anchor drops into the water. Officials in white clothes jump on board and run up the accommodation ladder with such alacrity as to suggest that the launch that brought them is sinking. Their appearance at the gangway is the signal for a kind of cloud burst of violence and disorder, for the onset of a sea orgie of terrifying confusion, for the opening of a Walpurgis night which needs neither thunder nor red fire to make it more unearthly than it is.

At the top of the accommodation ladder is suspended a cluster of electric lamps, in the white glare of which stands a tall quartermaster on guard. Behind him are crowded the faces, hats, and helmets of miscellaneous passengers anxious to go ashore. At the foot of the ladder a like blaze of lamps illumines an Egyptian policeman, clad in white drill, with a scarlet tarboosh on his head and a stick in his hand. The lamps are so shaded that the sea for a wide semicircle beyond the ship's side is lit

with exceeding brilliancy. Beyond this area, which is as sharply defined as a magic-lantern disc on a screen, is a darkness impenetrable. From this black void now come a roar as of a fearful wind, screams as of a pack of hyenas, yells as from the bottomless pit. That the sounds issue from human throats may be surmised, for in a moment into the arena of light some thirty earth-coloured boats make sudden entry. Such is the bewildering gloom that their number may be three hundred. They come from every quarter of the arc, the bows of all converging to one point—the ship's ladder. They are propelled in frantic fashion by earth-coloured men in fluttering earth-coloured rags, who rend the air with shrieks as they advance. The eddying tide turns the line of the oncoming host, but some five boats shoot forward and reach the ship simultaneously with a crash.

Then appear a score of skinny arms clutching at everything, even clutching at the air. The men in the nearest boat would seem to try to drive their talons into the iron skin of the ship. They hang on to any dangling rope, to the ladder, to the rail. The drag of the tide appears to be pulling their arms out of their sockets. They cling on not only with hands but with feet, with boathooks, with unwound turban cloths. The men in the outer boats snatch at the inner ones until the tide bears the less daring away. One can almost hear the scratching of their nails along the wood as they are drawn off into the darkness.

A crowd of other boats emerge into the light as if entering upon a stage. The arena is full, crammed

to cracking. The fight is for the ladder. One now looks down from the height of the ship into a maelstrom of boats, rocking lanterns, gibbering men, flapping rags, naked arms and legs, and dirty turbans. What little water is visible is turbid, as if it were a solution of the mud-coloured horde. This mass of things seems to be cast up by the whirlpool, while now and then fragments are sucked out of sight again. A feverish musty smell, unpleasantly human, rises out of the cauldron. The rush for the ship's side is so savage that the scene might depict pirates boarding a galleon or the onslaught of a pack of sea wolves, if sea wolves exist.

There is no room to row. The boats cling together like a swarm of bees. Each mariner seems to have six arms instead of two. Any craft detached from the rest by the process of stamping on men's hands and heads drifts away into the darkness. For the most part the men in the bows of the boats fight, scramble, and scratch, while the man at the tiller shrieks in a voice hoarse and quivering. Now and then the helmsman will throw off his rag of a robe and, rushing forward, will fall with tooth and nail upon any enemy presenting in the prow. One man, still tugging at an oar, frees himself from a clinging rival by planting a bare foot in his face and pushing the face aside until the neck belonging to it seems likely to break.

The general purpose of the rabble is to land newcomers and luggage, to take off passengers wishing to go ashore, and to do miscellaneous business. The first boat to reach the steamer contains firemen who are to be shipped

at Aden. They stand huddled together in the centre of the craft, each man grasping an ill-shapen bundle. At the critical moment they show a lack of purpose, whereupon the helmsman, throwing two bare arms up to heaven, rushes forward with a yell, and falling upon them from behind would seem determined to push them up the ladder as he would a box. As a result of this onslaught the firemen tumble over the thwarts and fall to the bottom of the boat, a heap of bundles and men. They rise, and once more the human battering ram is upon them, so that they fall again, having advanced one thwart by the manoeuvre. When they gain the ladder they are faced by a dense row of passengers who are clinging to the handrail like birds on a wire. The firemen squeeze their way upwards between the ship's side and the line of white jackets and skirts, and, passing the man on guard, vanish in the crowd on the vessel. Would-be visitors to Aden now drop into boats from the ladder, like ripe fruit, balance themselves in dazed fashion on the rocking thwarts, sit down with seeming unconsciousness and drift away into the night.

A boat arrives with passengers from the south—two trembling women, a child, and personal effects. The child is plucked out of the boat by a long armed quartermaster as a root is pulled up from the earth, and while the affrighted creature is suspended in mid air the craft, feebly manned, drifts out of view. It is evident from its open mouth that the child is screaming. From like evidence it might be gathered that the women are also screaming, but such is the encompassing din that no definite human cry reaches the onlooker from the ship.

About this moment an illicit dealer has been discovered on deck and is being driven off by blows. He escapes by sliding down the vertical rope that supports the foot of the ladder. He falls into a craft and, jumping from boat to boat, flies as does a pickpocket down a tortuous lane. The white tunicked policeman is after him. Alighting on a man's bent back, as on a platform, he also springs from boat to boat. In this passage he overturns a tray of oranges illumined by a lamp. He reaches the culprit in about ten leaps: he grapples with him: he beats him on the face: there is a gleaming of two sets of white teeth: they fall together to the floor of a boat and are lost to sight. In a while the officer emerges, and, returning in chamois fashion to his station on the ladder, appears full of contentment.

A thoughtless passenger, leaning over the ship's gunwale, throws a coin among the crowd. It drops among a company of would-be merchants. In a trice the boat they occupy is a wriggling, writhing mass of backs, rags, elbows and feet, while from beneath the knot comes the sound as of a dozen dogs gnashing their teeth over the same bone.

When at last all the landing and embarking are over, the arena is occupied by traders who in a jostled fleet offer for sale fruit, German vases, savage weapons, Manchester shawls, calabashes, picture postcards, baskets, feather boas, sharks' jaws, and the horns of wild beasts. There is henceforth comparative peace, less noise in the air, more colour on the face of the waters. The light streaming from a porthole will fall now upon a woman in a scarlet wimple, now upon a sheath of spears or a pile of yellow

fruit, or again upon a black face so streaming with perspiration that the man may have risen from the deep. Leaving this curious Vanity Fair, it is a relief to seek the empty smoking-room and to turn over the undisturbing leaves of an illustrated paper a fortnight old.

Aden as seen at night, at about the time of three bells in the first watch, appears to be a place of great enchantment. Against the dull sky there arises a shapely and comfortable hill, a hill neither so high as to be oppressive, nor so low as to be mean. At the foot of the hill is a town of many lights. The walls of this town must reach to the sea, for a line of lamps, like a line of stars, is reflected in the water. For all one can tell here may be some pleasure-haunted city in a tropical island, a place verdant with palms and flowering trees, where the balconies of white houses are festooned with convolvulus. The string of lamps might mark such a sea promenade as the Place Bertin at St. Pierre in Martinique. There are dots of light about the hillside too, which suggest bungalows hidden in gardens, from the terraces of which ladies in white muslin are watching the ship come to anchor.

It is true that the skyline of the hill is as sharply cut as the edge of a piece of theatre scenery, but then hilltops are often bare. Moreover, the lights on the slope never flicker as do the lights in southern villas when wreaths of bougainvillea swing before the windows, but on this particular evening the air is still. There is nothing about the aspect of Aden at night to deliberately encourage a false impression. Such charm as it has depends entirely upon a ruthless suppression of the truth. Aden

at night is like a shapely head with an ugly and scarred face heavily veiled.

In the uncharitable light of day the veil is lifted; Aden is seen without any illusions and the sight is unpleasant. There is nothing of the Isles of the Blessed about it, it is merely a mass of firebrick to which a shrivelled swarm of houses is clinging. There is nothing of the seaport about the place, no cosy harbour full of small boats, no quay studded with bollards and slashed by mooring-ropes, no suggestion of the rum shop or the sail loft or the pilot's café. There is neither marine parade nor sea front, but merely rocks interrupted by gaps of deserted beach. The line of stars brought out by the night is a hollow snare. The dot of light on the hill does not come from a dainty lamp by whose rays a sweet girl in muslin is working at embroidery. It issues from a slush lamp, swarming with flies, under which a collarless man in his shirt sleeves is writing up a signalling book; or it may issue from a hospital orderly's 'bunk,' the orderly being busy alternately with the mopping of his face and the compiling of the list of effects belonging to a man recently dead of cholera.

Aden is a heartless earth-heap, a mass of sharp-featured, mud-coloured rock rising out of the sea and ending skywards in many crags and pinnacles. It is scrupulously bare of vegetable life. There is not a blade of grass in the whole domain. Even the poorest pariah of a bush finds no footing on its harsh hillsides, while the crannies among the rocks deny a shelter to the feeblest stem or leaf. It must be that the spot was excluded from the joys of that day when the earth

'brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind,' for the mountain might have been recently red-hot so that everything had been burnt off it to the water's edge. Where should be a slope of green is a glissade of dust, the field is a plain of blinding sand, the glen that might be knee deep in ferns and moss is a fissure full of hot stones.

The place seen from the anchorage is not the town of Aden, but an outpost called Steamer Point. As no one would live in this part of the world for pleasure or only under the direst need, the houses are of the type known as 'official,' low buildings with red roofs that look like a gathering of small provincial railway stations. One house with a long shuttered verandah suggests the grand stand on an unsuccessful racecourse closed for the winter. Another residence resembles a riding-school, and a third a goods dépôt.

There is a clock tower in the place, which is reassuring, and a club which is as the shadow of a rock in a weary land, but the only really human house among them all is a little white villa perched on a crag by the flagstaff, which has not only a thatched roof but also a green creeper climbing over the lattice of a balcony. This precious plant is frail and delicate looking, its leaves veined like the hand of a pining child. It is watched with all the care that would be lavished upon a solitary living thing. It is the olive branch carried to be a token that the world is not all sea and mountain-top. In this fastness of armed forts it protests the faith that there is still somewhere joy on earth, peace and goodwill.

One curious part of the town is 'The Crescent,' a semicircle of picturesque eastern-looking houses with colonnades and verandahs, white pillars and arches, relieved by green sunblinds and multicoloured roofs. This sweep of buildings is bounded in front by a sandy flat and behind by a sudden background made up of a precipitous hill, bare of any vestige of life and relieved only by slopes of dust and stones. So abrupt is the separation of the living from the dead, of the habitations of man from the primeval, unfertilised crust of the globe that the place suggests an attempt to realise the extreme Edge of the Earth, or what Sancho Panza would call 'The Fag End of the World.'

This purgatorial country knows nothing of change. There are the sky above and the sea below, and, between the two, stones and dust. Nothing relieves the one dead tint of sterile earth. There are no seasons; no spring when the hawthorn clothes itself with white and the apple tree blushes with pink blossoms, no autumn when the woods become a blaze of ruddy brown and the bracken a field of gold. Here are only the time when the days are hot and the other time when the days are hotter. No rain falls upon these barren hills. The rare shower, if it does drift hither, brings with it neither life nor refreshing. It is a rain that beats upon dry bones. No single petal lifts its head in gratitude for the gift, for it falls upon a land that has been fruitless and dead since the dawn of time.

All that is soft and gentle, all that is gracious and bountiful is banished from Aden. Let this peak that crowns the height be called the Peak of Joys Remembered,

and this burning path that toils up to it the Path of Sisyphus. Let this pass be the Pass without Hope, and this valley of stones be the Vale of Weariness. Or rather let the memory of this tired, homeless corner of the earth be blotted out with all speed amidst Devonshire lanes, upon breezy downs, and in spinneys cool with the blue of nodding hyacinths.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAPE

CROSSING the Gulf of Aden the steamer makes for Cape Guardafui, and there enters the open ocean at last with the wide East before it. Guardafui is a great cape and a famous. From the dawn of the craft of the sea it has been an enticing landmark. The first sailor men who came in sight of it were no doubt adventurers from the Persian Gulf. The Cape drew them southwards towards the belt of the earth as a magnet draws steel, filling their minds with dreams of the land of the Beyond. For long the Cape must have marked the confines of their ocean world, the limit of the seaman's daring, the utmost goal to be reached by the tiny sail or the labouring oar. Times beyond counting has it been hailed by weary men with the stirring call of 'Land! Land ahead!' It has seen much of wreck and more of desperate endeavour, for about its crest there circles a baffling wind and at its feet sweeps ever a masterful tide.

On the present journey the Cape came into view at the time of the dawn. The deck was deserted and silent. Three men asleep in chairs provided the only evidence of life; but cushions lying about, together

with a few books and some empty glasses, served to show that they were not alone on the ship. The sea was calm and curiously bright. It was a sea of mother-of-pearl, the faint ripples of which were edged with primrose. The sky above was plumbago blue, but towards the east it passed into a golden yellow which again changed into orange where the rim of the horizon was reached.

Far ahead a gaunt arm of land was thrust out into the sea, and at the end—as if it were a defiant fist—was Guardafui. The spit of land had the tint of a wintry mist, and so unsubstantial did it look that one felt it might fade away when the daylight strengthened. At the spot where the sun would rise was a jagged blood-red cloud edged about with yellow flame. Standing up against this unearthly light, a silhouette with every detail of its outline clearly cut, was a dhow bearing aloft a pointed and rakish sail. This little waif of a ship steering boldly for the sun, this mere speck in the prodigious space, made the amazing picture dramatic. The craft might well have been the ship of Sinbad the Sailor away on one of her marvellous voyages, for the glamour of the scene was worthy of the Tales of the Arabian Nights.

The Cape itself is of no great height and is marked by neither beacon nor lighthouse. It is made up of harsh rock which glistens as if it had been freshly chipped. It changes its hue as the light sweeps over it, from a ruddy grey to a rust-like brown. A sheer cliff marks the actual point of the promontory, while at its foot, as well as in every hollow on its broad shoulders, is drifted

sand. On the long sweep of bare grit which lies north of the Cape is a small cluster of native huts close to the sea. Of all villages, the abodes of man, this is assuredly the thirstiest looking, the grittiest, and the most penitential.

When the Cape is passed the ship turns southwards along the coast of Africa. The land as seen from the deck is uninteresting and monotonous, a succession of brown or red cliffs, of yellow beaches, of stretches of poor scrub, of uplands which appear to be barren and burnt up. Seldom are there any visible signs of human life. For all that can be made out from the ship, the country might be without inhabitants or have been recently swept by sword, pestilence or famine. It would seem to be townless and harbourless, with never a green gap in its harsh sea wall and never a wooded haven into which ships might creep.

Mile after mile for many leagues, hour after hour for many days, the steamer toils along the same arid, silent coast without, it would seem, a single human eye to follow it. Such is the great inhospitable country of Somaliland, which remains to refute the belief of some that the world is already overcrowded.

CHAPTER V

THE SEA GATE

THE steamer is now approaching the most portentous spot on the coast—Mombasa—the sea gate of the hitherto impregnable fastness of Africa, the entry that has led to the secret recesses of the continent, the sally port through which invaders have poured into a stronghold which has been beleaguered for centuries.

The story of the town is one of abiding violence and unrest, for Mombasa has known probably more of fighting than any place of like pretensions on the globe. It has been a half-submerged rock which, on every rising of the wind, is swept by wave after wave, so that its only times of peace have lain in the trough of the sea between the billow that has passed and the one that is oncoming. It has been many times burned and left in ruins, while the occasions on which it has been besieged, now by the Arabs, now by the Portuguese, and now by the Turks, are well-nigh beyond reckoning. Its market-place has rung with the cries of wholesale murder, its streets have been stifled with gangs of slaves, and its storehouses glutted with stolen ivory. It has provided for centuries a haven to that ocean

THE OLD CITY WALL, MOMBASA.

HIGH STREET, MOMBASA.

freelance, the roving dhow on its career of promiscuous iniquity. It has been a retreat for pirates and for other desperadoes of peculiar virulence. Mombasa, moreover, in its intervals of calm, has watched caravan after caravan start westwards into the unfathomable land, has watched the leaders across the ford, turn back for a moment to look their last on the sea, and then vanish into the forest.

It would seem that as long ago as the Norman invasion of England Mombasa was a settlement of some repute. The first visitors to the place were no doubt Arab adventurers, for did not Ibn Batuta, the bold Arab traveller, come here in 1331 or thereabout and place it on record that the islanders were 'very pious, chaste, and virtuous'? The Arabs remained in possession of the town until the end of the fifteenth century, when Vasco da Gama, in the course of his famous expedition, anchored off Mombasa, which was then, as he terms it, 'a great city of trade with many ships.' A legend exists that on this occasion of his coming he was in danger of being wrecked on the coral reef owing to the treachery of a pilot. Whatever shred of truth may cling to this story, the fact remains that the chief highway in the town bears to this day the name of Vasco da Gama Street.

The Portuguese gradually possessed themselves of this part of the African coast, and the period of their tenure may be considered to date from 1505, for in that year His Excellency Dom Francisco d'Almeida, on his way to India as Viceroy, attacked the town and burnt it. This lesson was not taken to heart in proper manner by the islanders, so some twenty-three years later Nunho

da Cunha, son of Tristan da Cunha, looked into the unrepentant harbour and once more reduced the town to ashes. The Portuguese maintained their hold of the place for some two hundred years, but they were years full to weariness of the clash of arms, of sieges and surrenders, of raids, massacres, and mutinies. The conquerors clung to it as a man clings to the mane of a wild horse who will brook no master. Twice did Turkish corsairs seize the distracted town and twice did the Portuguese batter them off the island with unstinted bloodshedding.

Between the two invasions of the Turks—as a kind of interlude—a savage tribe called the Zimbas swept over the place and left it desolate. Apparently the Portuguese, as soon as the Turks had been disposed of, erected a chapel on 'The Point' to Nossa Senhora das Merces. This building the Arabs—when a change of fortune came to them in 1696—turned into a fort, and the ruin of the house of Our Lady still stands, as any can testify who may sail by daylight into Kilindini Harbour.

In 1593 the Portuguese, then at the height of their power, built a great fort at Mombasa, by the edge of the cliff, and called it the Jesus Fort. This sturdy fort commands by its position the sea gate of East Africa, and although it has long since fallen into a state of hebetude, it is yet the glory of the town and one of the finest ancient monuments in Africa.

By the end of the seventeenth century the prestige of the Portuguese was declining, their grip upon Mombasa was becoming feeble, and the Arabs, as represented by

VASCO DA GAMA STREET, MOMBASA.

the Omani, became the masters of the island. This mastery was not obtained without difficulty. On March 15, 1696, the Arab fleet entered the harbour of Mombasa and laid siege to the great fort. In this fort some fifty Europeans and over two thousand natives had taken refuge. The numbers of the beleaguered were soon reduced by an outbreak of bubonic plague, so that by July 1697 the garrison was represented by the commandant, two white children, and between fifty and sixty natives. The little garrison still held out.

In August the commandant died and a native chief succeeded to the post of constable of the tower, but still the flag on the ramparts was not pulled down. It was, indeed, not until December 12, 1698, that the Arabs were able to force their way into the stubborn fortress, which had then withstood a siege of no less than thirty-three months. The garrison found within the walls was composed of eleven men and two women—miserable enough objects, no doubt. They had kept guard and fought, had fought and kept guard, for well-nigh three years, during which time they had seen two thousand of their comrades die before their eyes. They had peace at last, for the first work of the conquerors when they rushed in through the battered door was to put this devoted company of thirteen to death.

The last occasion on which the Portuguese flag flew from the summit of the Jesus Fort was in 1727, and then only for a few weeks. There was indeed scarcely an interval in these long years when the folk of Mombasa could consider that security was the lot of their harried town. Some crisis was ever at hand, some storm of

war gathering over the hills or across the sea; so that it must have become a habit of the people, man, woman, and child, to look every hour of the day towards the harbour mouth to see what fresh terror was coming upon them.

Under the Omani rule the same wearisome story of fire and sword was told year after year with all the monotony of a madman's chant. It became the song of Mombasa, the unacknowledged national song. The ending of the narrative, the ceasing of the ancient rhyming, was not so long ago. So far as its more lurid features are concerned it is probable that the last incident of interest is to be found in the following item from a brief history of the place.[1] 'The peace which was thus concluded was, however, only a truce, and after the Mazrui Arabs had twice unsuccessfully attempted to throw off the Muscat yoke, Seyid Said took Mombasa in 1837 and treacherously seized the reigning Mazrui, Rashid ben Salim, whom he sent with twenty-four of his adherents to the dungeons of Bunder Abbas to be starved to death.'

The most remarkable feature of this region depends upon the fact that until the middle of the nineteenth century the interior of the country was a blank. A belt of waterless land cut it off from the outer world as completely as if the barren strip had been a mighty moat or an unassailable wall.

Rebman and Krapf discovered the mountains of Kilima Njaro and Kenia in 1848 and 1849. Burton and Speke reached Lake Tanganyika in 1857, while in the following year, a year the most momentous in

[1] *The Directory of British East Africa*, Mombasa, 1909, p. 25.

East Africa, Speke looked down upon the wide waters of the Victoria Nyanza. In 1863 Speke and Grant reached Uganda and followed the Nile to Egypt. This, be it noted, was less than fifty years ago. From that time forth the scramble for Eastern and Central Africa began. Uganda was made a British Protectorate in 1894, and British East Africa the same in 1896; so these names belong to countries which are even now but in their earliest infancy.

The population of Mombasa is given (in 1908) as 24,573, of which number 226 are Europeans. The death rate of the island is stated to be 25·7 per 1000.

The total annual rainfall in Mombasa (as illustrated by the year 1908) is 52·9 inches. The greater rains are in April and May, the lesser about October and November.

The climate of Mombasa is distinctly trying to Europeans, especially during the hot season, from December to the end of March. The heat, so far as discomfort is concerned, cannot be gauged by the thermometer, for with a temperature below 90° F. the atmosphere may appear intolerable. It is a heat that makes the heart faint and the body weary, a sickly, anæsthetising heat. Just as extreme cold induces the traveller to throw himself on the snow and sleep, so, under the equator, the sun persuades the white man to throw himself into a long chair and sleep, or pretend to sleep. There is something actually oppressive in the warmth, for it seems to have substantial weight. Thus it is with no little relief that the sun helmet is lifted off the forehead from time to time, as if it were a crown of lead.

Malaria is common in this district, being indeed the chief source of ill-health in the island. The sanitary conditions, especially as regards water supply, are not satisfactory. In spite of all this, the English residents form the most cheery and most genial little coterie on this side of Africa, and, it may be added at the same time, the most hospitable and kindly.

It is upon the ladies of a tropical colony that life falls the hardest, particularly when the opportunities for taking leave are less frequent than the climate demands. Although their lives are spent in an island of incomparable beauty, radiant with sun and dazzling with colour, still there is ever a longing for that other island, dull and sombre though it be, which stands for home. While there may be many in England who are grumbling of grey days, there are not a few within the belt of the tropics who would give much for one hour of the chill haze of an October evening. Time in Mombasa is reckoned not in calendar years, but in the months that intervene between the last 'coming back' and the next 'going home.'

In a certain villa on 'The Point' at Mombasa I was admiring the view from a window that looked across the harbour mouth, and suggested that it must be very interesting to sit there and watch the steamers starting out for home. This remark was received in silence by the lady of the house, and then I realised that, with two long years to look forward to before the next time for leave came round, the view from that window was not one to look upon.

THE DHOW HARBOUR, MOMBASA.

THE CLUB GARDEN, MOMBASA.

CHAPTER VI

MOMBASA

IT is at night-time that the steamer reaches Mombasa and casts anchor in the open sea, for it is not customary to enter the harbour after dark. When the day dawns there can be seen from the anchorage a grey coast, faint and inconspicuous, an undulating land showing notably three small hills in a line, 'the crown of Mombasa,' the same being the ancient landmark that guided the adventurous to this shy haven. So subtly is the harbour hid in this interminable stretch of coast that it is a matter for wonder the spot was ever discovered, or, when once come upon, was ever found again.

Mombasa is on an island lodged in an oval bay or cove which it nearly fills. It is like an eye in a socket that through the narrow opening of the bay looks out across the sea towards the rising sun. It is a tropical island surrounded by a narrow belt of blue water, beyond which on all sides is a forest of palms. The island is small, being about three miles long by one-and-a-half miles wide. The place as revealed through the dark sea entry is inscrutable. It presents a line of white houses, at the end of which is the lighthouse, with the

light so low that it seems to be blinking from an upper window.

On nearer approach the island is seen to be green to the water's edge, to be set upon a low brown cliff, while the houses prove to be bright-coloured bungalows scattered among the bush, but in no formal line. The actual town of Mombasa lies to the north of the island and does not come into view, although there can be observed the flank of the old, weary-looking fort, much weather beaten and yellow with age. The small settlement of Kilindini is on the southern rim of the isle, and southwards the steamer goes, as the harbour of Mombasa is unable to take vessels of great draught.

Kilindini harbour is neither vast nor impressive, but singularly beautiful. It is as little like a deep sea harbour as can be imagined, being merely a narrow, winding creek, wandering away into a wood. The palm trees come down to the edge of the water, where they are reflected upon its unruffled surface in perfect detail of leaf and stem and hanging fruit. It is a secret haven shut out from the sight of the sea, yet within sound of the coral reef which forms the harbour bar. Into this leafy hiding-place surely Sinbad the Sailor must have come in the course of his chequered voyagings. Surely it must have been here, under those very calabash trees, that he met with the Old Man of the Sea. This hollow in the overhanging cliff into which the tide is creeping may well be the entrance to the cave out of which he crawled after he had been so barbarously buried alive. Must it not have been on Mombasa Island that he saw, above the mangoes and the golden

THE OLD FORT, MOMBASA.

mohur, the smooth white mass of the roc's egg rising up like the dome of a mosque against this sky of blue ?

The landing-place has no doubt altered a good deal since Sinbad's time. A rowing boat puts the traveller ashore at a small jetty among a crowd of white-clad negroes, mostly wearing tarbooshes, who fume vehemently in an unknown speech and make the very atmosphere feverish by the incoherency of their movements. Among them are a few impassive Sikh police in khaki uniforms with cherry-coloured turbans. They are as silent as the natives are voluble. The jetty leads to the custom-house, an oppressive shed of corrugated iron, the floor of which is deep in dust and loose stones, and the temperature of which is that of a furnace. In this place, amid a crowd of malodorous porters, a Babel of tongues, and an avalanche of luggage, the intricate business of landing is carried out at the time probably of high noon. There is some reason for the belief that the custom-house at Mombasa is, to the ruffled passenger, the hottest spot on the inhabited globe.

By the side of the custom-house is a narrow and commonplace line of rails which the traveller should take note of, since it is a filament of the most remarkable railway in the world. This is the very starting-point of the Uganda railway, of that iron road which leads from the world-pervading ocean, through the primeval wild, to the heart of Africa, to the Great Lake and the Mountains of the Moon.

The island itself is beautiful, being luxuriously wooded and is the most entirely tropical spot that will be met

with on the present journeying. It shows in its air of culture and comfort the results of a long European occupation. Mombasa is divided into two parts, the old Arab-Portuguese town and the English settlement. The latter occupies what is known as 'The Point,' and is a veritable Garden City, being made up of picturesque and pleasurable villas disposed with a blithe disregard of space or of determined arrangement. There are roads, but scarcely a definite street, the happy-go-lucky houses being approached by ways which are but a little advance upon the casual path that led through the virgin undergrowth.

A curious feature of Mombasa, a feature which has done much to mould its outlines and fashion its character, is the trolley. This is the vehicle of the island, a conveyance as proper to the place as the gondola is to Venice or the drosky to St. Petersburg. It consists of a plain four-wheeled truck provided with an awning and a seat for two. It runs upon narrow rails of the ordinary tramway type, being pushed along by a couple of specialised rickshaw boys. The rails wander everywhere with as little apparent purpose as if they followed the footsteps of an inquisitive but absent-minded man. Every detached house has its own railway running up to the front door. The lady makes all her calls on a trolley, arriving by rail at each house she wishes to visit. Having left her cards at one door, which is probably the terminus of a branch line, she proceeds to the nearest 'points' and is there switched on to that special railroad which leads to the next place of call. The official goes to his office in his own trolley, while

INTERIOR OF OLD FORT, MOMBASA.

A MOMBASA TROLLEY.

the blushing maid hurries to the Christmas dance on hers. She flutters with anxiety at every junction or siding, lest in the dark she should be 'side tracked' or shunted on to the wrong railway line. Romeo rushes to the trysting-place by rail to meet his Juliet. He has learned to know the sound of her trolley wheels, and to distinguish from among a score the ravishing sound of her footbrake. Should he be late he can always plead that, while wrapt in a dream, he was carelessly shunted at the last crossing. The diner-out seeks his host upon a line of rails. The reveller, hoarse with song, is wheeled contentedly home, while, last of all, the sick man finds his way to the hospital by the same method of delivery.

The stranger wishing to take a trolley makes for the trolley stand by the Public Garden. He beckons. A trolley emerges from under the shade of a gorgeous bourgainvillea; it is wheeled to the rail; is lifted upon it, and the fare is trundled off to the post-office, or to the lighthouse for a breath of sea air, or 'free wheels' down the superb avenue of mangoes along the Kilindini road. This unwonted form of transit rather suggests a colony of grown-up folk playing at trains, but it is probably the outcome of a kind of infection brought into the island by the Uganda railway.

A more familiar knowledge of 'The Point' can be obtained by following a little footpath along the harbour side from the old fort to the lighthouse. The way keeps to the edge of a slight cliff of coral rock, lava brown and jagged fantastically into the semblance of a multitude of tiny capes and creeks. At high tide the

sea breaks along the foot of this coast of Lilliput. The path is very green, while all the way it winds among flowers and shrubs of infinite variety, by papaw trees and aloes, by cactus and frangipanni. Creepers hang over the cliff in rustling folds, in festoons of green, of purple, and of red. Any who look up from the sea would behold above them a hanging garden that hides the crude rock, as dripping moss covers a fountain stone.

Close to 'The Point' is the ruin of a small stone fort of great antiquity. It is, I believe, the fort known as St. Joseph. Although reduced to a few sun-tanned walls with gateways and battlements, it is still a work of considerable arrogance. It is almost buried in green, for to reach it one needs to wade hip deep through a drift of shrubs and creepers and a tangle of vetch bright with a thousand flowers. This bank of green is the sole rampart that now protects it, a defence work competent only to resist the assault of the small and timid boy. Below the fort and on the very brink of the cliff is a bastion with ancient guns, a place of infinite charm, worthy to be Celia's arbour. Through the rugged embrasures for the ordnance can be seen, framed in a square of stone, the sea rippling in the sun and now and then, it may be, the sail of a dhow. There are musket slits also in the wall, shoulder high, where in the place of the ghost of a ragged seaman standing there with a red handkerchief round his head, with his musket in place and his fuse smoking, was a little girl in a white frock trying to look out of the hole by standing on tiptoe.

There are still the old guns in this flower-bedecked redoubt. They are lying in the grass, like sleeping soldiers, mere lumps of dead iron. One cannon, however, remains mounted and in place. It is borne upon a gun-carriage of worm-eaten wood, the wheels of which, much shrivelled and worn, are also of wrinkled oak. It maintains still its correct military position with its muzzle pointing through the great loophole, still looking out to sea, still watching for the Portuguese, still alert and soldier-like. As it stands now, so in all likelihood it stood when the gunner threw down his last match and when the bugle sounded ' Cease firing.' The gunner, his sons, and his grandsons have long since crumbled into dust, but still the gun stands in position on guard, the sole survivor of the garrison. It is a pathetic figure, this one guardian of the fort among its slumbering comrades. Its faithfulness and persistence can only compare with the staunch devotion of that greater hero, the little tin soldier in Hans Andersen's fairy tale.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARAB TOWN AND THE OLD FORT

MOMBASA town is a place of brilliant colour. The roads, the tint of desert sand, are blinding in the sun. Everywhere are there luxuriant trees, the deep-shaded mango, the feathery casuarina, and the baobab with its great grey trunk. Against the masses of green which border every road the white robes and red tarbooshes of the natives stand out in strong contrast, while overhead against the sky are masses of purple bourgainvillea, the exquisite vermilion blossoms of the golden mohur and the plumes of the palm.

The view from the verandah of the club affords in miniature a brilliant picture of the scenery of Mombasa. It would dazzle the eyes of those who think that no outlook from a club window can be meritorious unless it includes in the foreground the mud of Pall Mall or the cab-stands of St. James's. Here in the foreground, in this month of December, is a garden of glittering crotons, a blaze of buttercup-yellow, of laurel-green, of tortoiseshell-brown, of claret-red. There are palms too among the bushes, together with a golden mohur aflame with flowers. Where the garden ends—a few feet

off—is the pansy-blue sea, and farther away the line of foam upon the coral reef and a cape crowded with cocoanut trees to the water's edge. This very reef is the shoal upon which Vasco da Gama was in the risk of being wrecked. If the eye of the lounger could reach beyond the horizon, it would find no land until it lit upon the shores of Sumatra or Ceylon.

The old town lies naturally enough close to the sea, near by the fragments of the ancient sea-wall. It presents two streets which, starting from the open space by the fort, diverge as if there was an animosity between them, one making sulkily for the sea, the other for the ferry. Within the triangle they bound the city is huddled.

The street that slopes to the water is called Vasco da Gama Street, in memory of the famous navigator. It contains an ancient mosque decorated with a small minaret in the shape of a sugar-loaf. The edifice is so plain that it might be made of mud covered charitably with whitewash, and so simple as to be a copy of the church a Moslem child would make on the beach out of wet sand. The *näiveté* of this primitive house of prayer is charming. Such is its humility, such its effort towards self-effacement, such its shrinking from any pretence to style, that it should be called the 'Mosque of the Poor Disciple.' Of the history of the place I know nothing, but I should like to think that it was erected by the fishermen of the island or by the builders of boats, and not by the men who harried the Hinterland and trafficked in human flesh.

The houses of the town, like all things that belong to Mombasa, are vivid in colour, although the prevailing

tint is white. White walls are relieved by red roofs, by green sun-shutters, by balconies of nut-brown wood or of curiously wrought iron. Here and there are palm trees or a mass of scarlet blossoms, or a festoon of blue convolvulus.

Apart from the two streets, the town is a maze of narrow lanes, none of which are straight and none of which follow for long any predetermined course. They dodge in and out among the buildings like distracted fowls when closely pursued. The town may be entered by a lane near to the Mosque of the Poor Disciple, a lane that after a few bold paces turns furtively to the left and then with some show of cunning to the right. The houses are lofty and provided with over-reaching balconies, so that the silent ways, paved as they are with dust, are still and mysterious. They are so narrow that no more than two can walk abreast. They are muffled with an oppressive gloom. The sun, if ever it penetrates into the labyrinth, is apt to cast fantastic shadows of roofs and balustrades upon bare walls, to slash the path with a startling bar of light, or to throw a single ray upon a discoloured spot on the wall as if it were a finger pointing to a splash of blood.

At night these ghostly lanes are full of strange shapes, and are as fearsome as any causeway in the many-gabled towns depicted by Gustave Doré. Possibly one might meet a man carrying a lantern, while at the next corner is a dark object that may be the cloak of a crouching figure lying in wait for him. Here in this blind alley might a gallant have stood at bay with his back to the wall facing a gang of thieves. Many a time these lanes must

ENTRANCE TO THE OLD FORT, MOMBASA.

THE WATER GATE, MOMBASA

have been awakened by shouts and stumbling feet, by the hue and cry after a runaway slave. Often enough must they have been blocked by a line of men carrying treasure like the troop of the Forty Thieves. It is well to note that the lower windows of every house are heavily barred, that the doors, often gorgeously carved, are as solid as the postern of a fortress, and that there are cellars with little access to the air whose walls can hardly yet have forgotten the groans of the stifled captive.

Near the Mosque of the Poor Disciple is a stone seat where Arabs in bright turbans might have sat cross-legged and wrangled over their unsavoury loot. There is a patio, too, close at hand, a little place with Moorish arches and stone pillars, where it is probable that justice was administered—justice of such a kind as controls a pack of wolves.

On the outskirts of this city of tortuous ways is the ancient Arab graveyard, long since abandoned and well-nigh hidden with irreverent weeds. The tombs and monuments are of a sad-looking stone. Many are of much pretension, but all, both the humble and the assertive, are dropping into decay. In one corner of the ground is the ruin of a stone mosque, of which alone the walls and two delicately outlined windows remain. But for a row of golden mohur trees along one side of the little enclosure it would be utterly dismal. Here in this forgotten spot, under the shadow of the great fort, and within sound of the city they knew so well, lie the men of the Arab dhows, the slave-dealers, the ivory merchants, the pioneers who had penetrated into the heart of Africa.

Here too in this graveyard of nameless adventurers lies buried, with the crumbling bones, the history of Mombasa town.

The old fort built on the brink of the coral cliff is huge and spacious. It is a veritable giant, so great in height and girth that when the sun is low in the east the shadow of its portentous mass makes twilight in the little town. Save for a barred window or loophole here and there, its walls are without a breach. They rise sheer from the gloomy moat and show against the sky a bold parapet with a stone conning-tower at each angle, while often enough the curtain between two bastions is surmounted by a crenellated edge notched like the edge of a saw. The walls are for the most part a yellow grey, showing, where the plaster has crumbled off, the great brown bricks of which the fort is built. Some of the walls are almost red in tint, while others are stained with vertical streaks of black as if blood had poured from the upper embrasures. Towards the sea the fortress presents one blank terrific precipice of masonry, pierced only by two sinister windows. At its foot is a redoubt which, by contrast with the mass behind, may be merely a garden enclosure. The Jesus Fort looks what it is, a defiant, hard-fighting veteran, still sullen, still obstinate, the hero of countless sieges and alarms, the witness of blood-shedding and violence enough to satisfy human passion to the end of time. Now children come to play about the water-gate that opens on the beach, while pigeons hover about the battlements and creepers have found a foothold in many a cranny of the careworn walls.

Jesus Fort is at the present time used as a prison.

OLD GUN IN THE BASTION, MOMBASA.

CORAL CLIFF, MOMBASA.

The prisoners are engaged in peaceful industrial pursuits and are more comfortably housed than was ever the garrison in ancient days. It may be claimed that, under the wise administration of the medical officer, Dr. Wm. Radford, there has been introduced into the fort for the first time in its history the element of humanity.

The entrance to the fortress is by a sloping road, at the bottom of which lie some dismounted cannon. One of these has stamped upon it the mark ' proof 8 lbs. 1815,' while another bears the date 1812. The actual entrance is defended by a very ancient and massive door covered by immense iron spikes. Within this portal is another doorway no less formidable. Over each of these arched ways is a stone carved with an inscription. The first deals with the building of the fort in 1593 and the two subsequent years. The second relates to the repairing of the fort in 1635 by his Excellency Dom Francisco de Seixas de Cabreira, and dwells at unctuous length upon the many and egregious virtues of that gentleman.

Within the main walls is a large courtyard made green by almond trees, by palms and shrubs. It is a garden rather than a prison square. At one end is the ancient well of the fort, wide and deep, from which water is still obtained by means of a primitive wheel. Although the water is a little brackish, this well has satisfied the thirst of many thousands of beleaguered men in centuries gone by.[1] There are certain specimens of ordnance round the courtyard, some of which have been removed from the ramparts, while others have been dug up in various ditches and ravelins. Among them

[1] The drinking water for the prison is now obtained from rain tanks.

are two fine brass guns bearing the date 1786, and two thundering carronades that might very well have been taken from a pirate ship.

The general body of the fort is full of interest, quite apart from its mysterious stairs, its strange entries, and its sinister passages. At every angle of the ramparts will be one of the look-out or sentry towers which give to the structure so much of its picturesqueness. They are of stone and are of varied types. Those with domed roofs undoubtedly belong to the Portuguese period, while those surmounted by a minute spire or minaret are evidently Arab. There are several delicately carved doors in the fort; while in the quarter where was once the old mosque are stone pillars, a fine arched doorway and beams covered with Arabesque designs or texts from the Koran. The ceilings of the rooms are for the most part made of old mangrove trunks filled in with coral rock.

From the summit of the fort may be obtained a fascinating view of the island and of the northern harbour, but no visitor to Mombasa should be content to leave this spot until he has seen the estuary from a boat, and until indeed he has followed it round the western side of the island from Mombasa to Kilindini.

The town as viewed from the harbour makes an agreeable, many-coloured picture. There are extensive remains of the old sea-wall. These fragments surmount the coral cliff and end in an indented border which, at a distance, looks a little like a line of tombstones. Palm trees and masses of bush spring up wherever there is ground to cling to. The square three-storied mosque is

A DHOW WITH SEWN TIMBERS, MOMBASA.

not beautiful to look upon, but the crowd of native huts with their heavily thatched roofs make amends for its prim outlines. Specially notable is the fleet of coasting dhows which find a haven under the cliff. They represent a type of vessel which has remained crude and unchanged for many hundreds of years. There is a rakish and reckless look about them which is quite in accord with their chequered past. These are the craft which carried slaves and ivory down the coast, and as one looks into their unclean holds it is possible to speculate how many wretched men and women could be packed into this miserable space. In spite of their haphazard equipment, their shiftless gear and their general look of unseaworthiness, these daring vessels make nothing of a voyage of a few hundred miles, while it is not to be forgotten that they did great things in the hazardous pursuit of piracy.

Of special interest was a dhow from the coast north of Lamu. The timbers of this archaic craft are sewn together from bow to stern, the whole ship being innocent of bolt or nail. This prehistoric vessel carries a square sail of ragged matting, and is occupied amidships by a thatched house or hut not unlike a cowshed. The ropes are of fibre and the general outfit is elementary in the extreme. To the modern boat this primeval craft is as the Eohippus to the horse of to-day. I doubt if a sailing ship of a more ancient type can be found on the high seas, for, compared with it, the Viking galleons which are occasionally exhumed on the coast flats of Norway are approximately recent.

There is a landing-place still at English Point on the

mainland, but of Frere Town but little remains. In a cocoanut grove, in an utter solitude not far from the sea, is a small square enclosure containing four plain graves. Three are unnamed, but the fourth is marked by a stone, which shows that it is the burial-place of Mrs. Krapf, the wife of the remarkable man who in 1849 discovered Mount Kenia. Krapf was a native of Tübingen, and under the auspices of the London Church Missionary Society came to Mombasa in 1843. His wife died in the year following. He and Rebman were the first Europeans who ventured into the interior of the country from Mombasa. They were the first to open up the road to the heart of Africa.

From English Point it is well to follow the estuary round behind the island to its southern side, for a lovelier sea inlet can hardly be imagined. At each moment the scene changes with all that infinite variation which can be brought about by blue water, by low hills and rugged cliffs, by sandy beaches, by a forest of palms and a belt of verdure unsurpassable in luxuriance.

CHAPTER VIII

A FEVER DANCE

ON one hot and breathless night at Mombasa there was a dance of the Swahili people.

The scene of the revel was a patch of bare ground in the native village under the boughs of a tree. By the trunk of the tree was an immense lamp which served to illumine the arena. The light fell upon a crowd of natives standing as tightly packed together as the outline of the human body would permit. It fell upon a plateau of woolly heads, of red tarbooshes, of white caps, with here and there the brilliant mantilla of a Hindoo woman or the face of a baby held aloft, or the sparkle of beads and earrings or of white teeth. The background was a sky of stars, against the faint shimmer of which were impressed the silhouettes of the limbs of a big-leaved tree and the thatched roofs of many huts. In the centre of the standing crowd a space was made for the dancers, a circular space hemmed round like a clearing in a cane brake.

The musicians sat under the lamp at the foot of the tree, where they were in occasional danger of being trampled upon. Two of the company blew trumpets—

straight wooden trumpets very much like those used by archangels in bas-reliefs on tombs. In addition there were a species of metal drum or gong beaten by sticks, a tenor drum gripped between a man's knees and thumped with both hands, and a large bass drum made sonorous by the same means. The music was solemn and monotonous. There was a certain illusive tune in it that never came to development, but remained nascent and elemental. It suggested the rudimentary music of the forest and the land, as if made up of such primitive sounds as the rush of the wind in the trees, the roar of wild beasts, the lowing of cattle, the hum of bees. It was quite in harmony with the chirping of the crickets, which could be heard whenever a lull came in the greater volume of sound.

The dancers were young Swahili women curiously dressed. Each wore a conical hat shaped like that of a Welsh peasant, but violent in colour, one being scarlet, another green, and a third yellow. From the brims of the hats brilliant streamers depended which served to hide the face. Skirts of coloured cloth were wrapped about the dancers' loins. Some of these were purple and white, others black, or vermilion and gold, while a few skirts displayed a design in spots, each spot being the size of a football. The rest of the costume was fantastic and varied, being represented by a leopard's skin, by the skin of a Colobus monkey, by dyed calico arranged like a Greek chiton, and by bewildering necklaces, masses of tinsel and beads. The shoulders, feet, and arms of the women were bare. About the feet hung heavy iron anklets so disposed that on any quick move-

ment of the limb they gave forth a clang like that of a cymbal or a bell. Each dancer carried in her hand a whisk of long hair, the waving of which was a feature in the figure.

The dance itself was very fascinating. The movements that composed it were slow, serious and dignified. The women, some twenty in number, moved with consummate ease and grace. Now they advanced in line and retreated, now they came forward in twos and threes, now they moved in a spiral like the water in an eddy. At one moment the compact body of them would open out like a bell flower; at another they would gather up into a many-coloured ball. Their feet were scarcely lifted from the ground, but each step was marked by the clang of their anklets, struck always in perfect time and rhythm. As the performers glided through the figure of the dance they waved their arms in sinuous circles, leaned to this side or to that, bent themselves backwards like a line of bows, or advanced with a writhing movement that only young and lissom bodies could attempt. Their faces, as has already been observed, were hid by the ribbons that dangled from their hats. This was well, for while the countenance of the Swahili woman is not beautiful, her figure, in her girlhood, is magnificent.

As they passed, the light fell upon such exquisite brown shoulders, arms, and necks that they might have been a bevy of Venuses. Their scanty dress was so disposed as never to blur a suggestion of the delicate outlines and fine moulding of the forms beneath. There was nothing to disturb a charm that was ever present,

the charm of sex; for in spite of the garish colours, in spite of the barbaric and ridiculous garb, the tender quality of womanliness was still all-pervading. It was a soft sensuous dance in perfect tune with the warm languor of a tropical night.

The name of the dance was not revealed, nor was its meaning known, nor what it symbolised; but it might well have been a dance in honour of that Fever God who ruled the land, an apotheosis of Hectic. The night was hot, the heat of the crowd was suffocating, for the mass of ardent folk shut in the circle as if by a wall of glowing metal. The light of the lamp might have poured from the vent of a furnace. The trumpets blared forth heat; the drums beat it forth; the clang of the iron anklets was as the ring of steel on an anvil.

The music rose and fell like the pulse of hot blood in a sick man's veins. Some spirit of fever had seized upon the musicians. They were as men possessed. One trumpeter, with a red tarboosh on the back of his head, with his face streaming with sweat, with his cheeks distended so as to look like two brown gourds, blew without a moment's ceasing. He might have been the Aeolus of the Monsoon from a tropical Temple of the Winds. The drums were beaten with maniacal hurry by dripping hands, the fingers of which were stretched rigidly apart as if by some fierce spasm.

The most terrible figure was that of the man with the bass drum. He sat upon a seat raised far above the others, a lean man evidently of great height. He was naked to the waist, his skin glistened as if it had been smeared with oil, while every muscle of his body was

in visible movement. With glaring eyes and clenched teeth and a look of fearful earnestness he bent forward towards the arena, rocking to and fro as a man in pain. The light from the lamp fell full upon him, bringing out his dreadful profile clean cut against the blackness beyond, so that he looked like a gargoyle seen in the glare of a burning church.

Another exceedingly heated figure was the master of the ceremonies or the director of the dance. He was a thin negro of middle age who kept in the centre of the arena and maintained throughout an incessant movement. On his head was a ludicrous wig made of some black skin, the hair of which was all on end. He wore a towel round his loins, and below this a skirt of white calico. From his hips two whisks, like ponies' tails, projected backwards. On his body was a very thin vest. This was white when he began, but as he perspired it became brown and then black, until finally it looked like wet tissue paper clinging to a surface of ebony. As a baton he carried a small knobkerry.

He sprang to and fro with his eyes half closed and his body bent almost double. His violent and excited actions were in vivid contrast with the stately carriage of the women. The restlessness of this Swahili Choragus was painful to see, for it became after a while the very embodiment of the unappeasable delirium of fever.

As to the dancers themselves, they might have been dancing in a furnace. Their friends, from time to time, brought them bowls of water. The *ballerine* would drink eagerly as if burning with thirst, and what water remained untouched in the bowl she would pour down her neck.

This dance of Hectic was kept up, it would seem, till the dawn of the next day. It was an infinite relief at the end of the first phase of the performance to break from the suffocating ring, from its glare, its noise and its heat, and stand once more in the open night with the sense that a dew was falling and be soothed by the sound of rustling palms and the far-off boom of the sea.

CHAPTER IX

THE UGANDA RAILWAY

In the opinion of many the Uganda railway is the most romantic, if not the most remarkable, railway in the world. There are grounds for believing that this opinion is sound. The road starts from Mombasa and, running in a north-westerly direction, reaches Port Florence on the shore of the Lake Victoria Nyanza at a point almost immediately beneath the Equator. The total distance traversed is 584 miles.

The surveying of the intended line was commenced in 1891. Its actual construction was embarked upon at the end of 1895, and on December 20, 1901, the first locomotive completed the journey from the sea to the lake. The difficulties that stood in the way of those who bore the burden of this work was almost overwhelming. The first surveying party—under the command of Major Macdonald—started from Mombasa on December 18, 1891.[1] They followed in the main the old caravan route that led to Kavirondo. It was not until March 24, 1892, that these pioneers reached the

[1] *Soldiering and Surveying in British East Africa*, by Major Macdonald, London, 1897.

district in which Nairobi now stands. They were thus occupied for no less than ninety-six days upon a journey which can now be accomplished in twenty-four hours.

The troubles encountered in this eventful three months were manifold and varied. In addition to the orthodox trials incident to drunken porters, thirst, fever, tropical rains, famines, and the constant attack of wild beasts, they were beset with certain exceptional annoyances. On one memorable night, for example, the party was alarmed by a mountain torrent which burst its banks and nearly washed the camp away. On another evening the bivouac was invaded and broken up by an army of red ants. These insects with blind pertinacity advanced in a column of many millions and marched unconcernedly through the line of tents as if these obstacles did not exist. On a third occasion the caravan was utterly routed by a swarm of bees, while, further on the journey, it became necessary to build stockades to ward off the attacks of more dangerous swarms—those of the warlike Masai.

The engineering difficulties that had to be met during the construction of the line were never commonplace. The road on its passage to the lake attains an altitude of over 8000 feet. It crosses dusty deserts and waterless plains, it zigzags down the precipitous escarpment of the Rift Valley, crosses the valley and climbs up the heights on the other side. For many and many a mile it makes its way through jungles which seem to be impenetrable and on occasion crosses ravines which are fearsome to contemplate.

MOMBASA HARBOUR.
Cocoanut Palms and Mangrove

A CARRIAGE, UGANDA RAILWAY.

Other vexations which beset the builders may be gathered from an account given by Gregory in the course of his journey inland at a time when the life of the railway was still in embryo. It had then only progressed some seven miles from the coast.

'Even for this short length,' he writes, 'it is not intact; in places the line is overgrown by shrubs; here and there the white ants have removed the foundations of the sleepers, rain has breached the embankment, and the natives have at intervals stolen a few lengths of the rails.' [1]

Now, thanks to the energetic management of Mr. H. A. F. Currie, the road, in its entire length, is as trimly kept as a path in a formal garden, and what is still more creditable, is without a weed.

The gauge of the railway is narrow, being only one metre, while the track consists of but a single line. Compared with the immensity of the ambiguous country through which it passes, it is a mere iron thread across the surface of the world, a thread that follows as perplexing a maze as did that strand of silk which guided Theseus through the labyrinth of Minotaur.

The romance of the Uganda railway, however, is not bound up entirely with engineering facts and feats. This narrow iron track traverses a country which has held inviolable until now one of the great mysteries of the globe. But a few years have elapsed since a white man for the first time in the earth's history burst into this secret place, hesitated on its threshold, and turned back. Now a road boldly makes its way through the

[1] *The Great Rift Valley*, by J. W. Gregory, London, 1896, p. 63.

innermost recess of the inscrutable land and opens the kingdom that was dreamed of to the curiosity of the world. This thread of steel projected inland has illumined the unknown, as if it were a sunray in a shuttered chamber. It has brought new life to a stagnant people, as if it were a nerve penetrating into inert flesh.

The speculative mind loves to dwell upon the fascination of travelling back into the past in order to see the world as it actually was long centuries ago, to see Europe in the Bronze Age, to see Britain before the Romans came. Here is a railway that goes backwards, a retrospective railway that makes a journey into the past, that pushes its way through a country still wild and untilled which has remained unaltered since long before the days of man. Here are naked and simple savages who have not yet emerged from the Neolithic or Early Bronze period. Here are the identical men of the round barrows and of the world of the mammoth. It is possible to see and to speak with a human being who uses to-day weapons and implements identical with those still dug up in the pleistocene deposits of Europe to be preserved like fossils in museums. Here are the lake dwellers and cave dwellers of prehistoric times with their surroundings unchanged, the great plains, the jungles, the wandering herds of wild animals. Here the white man and the black man meet after a separation of a million years. In the uplands, where the air is cool, is to be seen an actual reproduction of Europe as it appeared in the Late Quaternary period. The railway, indeed, carries the traveller back from the twentieth century to the years that were ages before Christ.

On the journey there is sure to be seen, from time to time, a naked savage, armed only with a bow and arrows, gazing from the shelter of the forest upon the passing train. It is a remarkable spectacle, for it makes nothing of a great gulf of years, and could be paralleled only by a conception of Noah gazing from the deck of the Ark upon the steamship *Mauretania*.

Travelling upon this railway is made extremely comfortable. The carriages are of the type found on railways in India. They are well protected from the heat and glare of the sun, and are provided with excellent sleeping accommodation. The only fuel used on the engines is wood. A through train is run on three days in the week from Mombasa to Port Florence. The train that leaves the coast on a Monday morning at 11 A.M. will reach the lake on a Wednesday morning at 8.30 A.M. The complete passage, therefore, involves two nights in the train, while at certain definite points a stoppage is made for meals.

It is well to compare this journey with the same journey as it was but a few years ago. To reach the lake from Mombasa in the old days occupied from two to three months, and if a party were now to attempt the expedition by road they would probably not accomplish it in less time. It was not the length of the old journey that made it burdensome, it was the intense unrest, the perpetual 'alarums and excursions,' which attended it. The heat was oppressive to men on the march; there was difficulty in obtaining water; provisions gave out and baggage became lost. Some of the company were either sick with fever or laid up with wounds.

There were frequent night attacks, as well as troubles with lions and other beasts. The porters were liable to desert, to steal, to sulk, to break out into mutiny, or to incontinently fall sick. There was danger of being swamped by torrential rain as well as of being burnt by the rush of a grass fire. It needed a large and lethargic mind to bear these woes with equanimity, and an obstinacy which was almost morbid to endure to the end.

A good deal of miscellaneous information about the railway can be obtained from the Company's Time Table. From the pages of that work the following items have been gathered:

'Ostriches and ostrich chicks will be carried in brake-vans of goods trains at owner's risk only.'

'Human ashes are carried in dust-tight boxes at fifth-class goods rates.'

'Small deer and cubs of wild animals such as lion, leopard, cheetah, cats, when in secure cages or crates small enough to go into the dog box, are charged Rs. 2 per hundred miles or portion thereof.'

'Young rhinoceri: in crates or otherwise, 37 cents per mile per animal; these will only be carried in separate brake-vans at owner's risk and one attendant allowed free.'

'Dak bungalow: passengers should fully understand that they must allow others to occupy the same room as themselves according to the number of beds in it.'

CHAPTER X

THE RED DESERT

THE Uganda railway on leaving the coast mounts steadily upwards mile after mile until it attains the mighty plateau which overlooks the centre of Africa. By the time that the escarpment of the Rift Valley is made the road has reached an altitude of 7390 feet. It then dips into the valley, climbs again to the height of 8350 feet—the Mau Summit—and finally slopes down to the lake, the waters of which are 3700 feet above the level of the sea.

In order to render the journey intelligible it is necessary to note the geographical zones through which the railway takes its course. They are these. As soon as the narrow coast belt and the foot hills of the plateau are passed, the zone of the Taru Desert is entered. Beyond this weary track of country come the plains, a stretch of open veldt and dense forest bisected some 370 miles from Mombasa by the Great Rift Valley.

The train when clear of Mombasa station runs through the luxuriant suburbs of the town, and crossing the estuary by the Salisbury viaduct, begins almost at once that ascent which is continued with little intermission until the chasm of the Rift Valley is sighted.

The first station is Changamwe, where the foot hills commence. It is typical of the many stopping-places which are passed on the journey. The station building is an unpretentious shed of corrugated iron with a projecting roof, which forms a shelter from both the sun and the rain. Such a refuge is necessary, since the native when he travels does not regard the train as a thing that is to be 'caught.' He has no concern with time beyond the data of sunrise, sunset, and high noon. He goes to the station to take a train. He may find one drawn up at the platform or may be told that the next is due to depart in two days. In the latter case it matters nothing. He waits. If to the iron building just mentioned be added a water tank, two posts for lamps, a placard with the name of the place, and some palm trees, the station is complete.

The *Chef de Gare* will be an Indian Baboo, a person of importance and apparently of affairs, for when there is only one train a day the most must be made of it. In almost every station there is a garden. Some of these when contemplated are apt to engender melancholy, not because they are mere famine gardens, but because they display so pathetic a disproportion between the end aimed at and the result obtained. Others are both beautiful and prosperous, giving to the spot a great charm, and above all a touch of humanity which counts for much in the wilderness.

The scenery on either side of the line from Mombasa through Changamwe to Mazeras is most enchanting. It has the charm of a wide view from a height, for it is possible to look down upon the coast belt for many miles,

CHANGAMWE STATION.

KIKUYU STATION.

[*See* page 107.

to see the blue estuary winding among the palm trees, to catch a glimpse of glens and valleys filled with the extravagant verdure of the tropics, and to follow to the horizon the line of low hills that slope eastward to the sea. For brilliancy of colour there is no prospect on the journey that is surpassed by this. The country in this district is elaborately cultivated, while among the plantations of maize and bananas are scattered the grey thatched huts of the natives of the part. Everywhere are there to be seen unfamiliar birds of gaudy plumage.

Beyond Mazeras the land changes; it becomes less tropical, less daintily wooded, and then with little prelude the road enters upon a vast bush country. Cultivation ceases, flocks of goats and of humped cattle take the place of the plantain 'shambas,' and the clothing of the native has diminished garment by garment and almost mile by mile until it is reduced to a negligible minimum. The goat-herd now appears armed with a spear or with bow and arrows, while the woman naked to the waist has lost the diffident look of the more fully clad female of the coast.

From the height soon reached the immensity of the view on all sides is most impressive. It is as spacious and as unimpeded as the outlook from a ship's deck in mid-ocean. It is a country of hill and dale which at a distance calls to mind the hills and dales of Surrey, since there is little to suggest that the region lies so near to the equator. This broad expanse of broken land, wild, trackless and practically unowned, fails to exhibit, beyond the fringe of the line, a sign of human life. If

this were England there would be in sight the spires of twenty churches, the white smoke of passing trains, a tower or a mansion on height and upland, or that blur in the green that marks the site of a town; but here one thin column of smoke rising steadily upwards from a far-off glen is the sole token of the presence of man.

The scene offers a realisation in some degree of a limitless domain unpossessed and uncared for, a realisation of the homelessness of Africa and a sense that so far as the rest of the world is concerned the spot lies under the ban of outlawry. More than that, the unbounded wilderness of trees recalls the words of one who knew the forest well: 'There is no prison so terrible as a limitless prison.'

At Samburu, a station forty-five miles from Mombasa, where the passenger lunches in great discomfort under the fan of a punkah, the Taru Desert begins. This so-called desert is a waterless zone which extends westwards as far as Maungu, a distance of forty miles. The lack of water depends not upon the lack of rain, but upon the remarkable porosity of the ground. It is a sorry country, shabby and hungry-looking, made up of poor trees and scrub, of thorn bushes and spurge. What little grass is to be seen is in miserly tufts. In the place of the good brown earth is a harsh soil the colour of rust, with the seeming hardness of red earthenware. There are many cracks in the surface of the land, as if it had been riven by fierce heat. This mocking wilderness, this sterile wood, this garden of thorns is uninhabited by either man or beast. Its extent seems to be infinite,

for whenever a distant view can be obtained the sepulchral forest reaches on either hand without a break to the skyline. To be lost in this gaunt labyrinth means a lingering death from starvation and drought.

It is easy to understand the prominent part this belt of desert has played in the history of Central Africa. It shut off all access to the interior from the east. It surrounded the mysterious heart of Africa as by a 'Boma' or fence of brambles. Within this stockade dwelt races of men in absolute seclusion, cut off from all communion with the rest of the world, for to the west lay a barrier as strong—the great Congo Forest.

The Taru Jungle looms portentously in all accounts of expeditions made into the interior from the coast at Mombasa. This obstacle was come upon early in the journey, before either leaders or men were hardy enough to stand so austere a test of endurance. To cross this desert involved a continuous march of thirty-five miles. This is no mean marching for the tropics for men who have not been many days on the road, and who have to carry a burden of sixty pounds on their heads.

In this transit the spot made for was the hill at Maungu, where there was a water hole. To many hundreds toiling through the forest this hill has been as the gate of Paradise. Men voiceless with thirst have staggered on, kept from falling by the one ever-present thought of the green hill; while those who dropped and died, as many did, would die with one vision before their eyes—Maungu and the water pool. The hill is close to Maungu railway station. None who have read of the desperate essays of the early pioneers can pass

this spot without a sense of awe or without muttering the cry 'Well done!' for it stands like a beacon that marks the far bank of a 'Slough of Despond.'

Thomson and his small party suffered intensely from thirst in crossing the Taru belt on their first return to Mombasa from up-country. On this occasion they accomplished a march of seventy miles in twenty-two hours, reaching water at Taru, a place not very far from the spot where now stands the excellent refreshment-room attached to Samburu station. In the last six marches of this journey they covered no less than 202 miles before they reached the ford at Mombasa.[1]

Those who pass through the Taru country at the present day need experience no discomfort either from thirst or from bodily fatigue, but they do not escape entirely without inconvenience. The weather being warm, the carriage windows are naturally kept open, and a red dust comes in. It is an unostentatious dust, but very persistent. Slowly it covers the seats of the compartment, the luggage, and the traveller. It covers them impartially and completely. It fills the hair as powder fills a powder puff. It insinuates itself down the neck until it forms a bright paint-like deposit on the skin of the chest and of the back simultaneously. It cannot pass through either glass or steel, but apart from this limitation of power it appears to have the penetrating qualities of radium.

The fact of the dust is brought graphically to the traveller's notice when, preparatory to dinner, he wipes his heated face with a white handkerchief. The surface

[1] *Through Masai Land*, by Joseph Thomson, London, 1885.

of the handkerchief becomes at once a rust red, very rich in tone, and for a second it seems as if the sunburn on his face had become soluble and had been wiped off in this episode of the toilet. A hair-brush applied without caution presents after use a blood-red appearance. These phenomena are none the less alarming when it is explained that the colour is due to oxide of iron in the earth. The explanation may be chemically correct, but it conveys little solace to the white man made red; while, at the same time, it will be understood that a self-esteeming lady without a mirror on this part of the journey is in danger of losing her reason.

CHAPTER XI

CONCERNING LIONS

AT Voi—the next station to Maungu—the traveller finds an excellent dinner which, unlike most meals on railways, can be eaten with Oriental leisure. Voi is of interest in that it is only five days' march from the famous mountain of Kilima Njaro. This peak reaches the height of 19,710 feet and is covered by perpetual snow. The mountain is best seen from a station called Simba, not far from Kiu, but then only if the sky be clear. On returning to his carriage the traveller makes preparation to sleep in an atmosphere still toned by red dust.

Within two hours of leaving Voi he will, if still awake, hear the train rumble in the darkness over a bridge. The circumstance is noteworthy, for the bridge is a memorable one, deserving to be called in the language of Japan 'The Honorable Bridge.' It is the bridge of Tsavo. The spot was the scene of the astonishing incidents so graphically described by Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson in his tragic work, 'The Man Eaters of Tsavo.'[1]

[1] *The Man Eaters of Tsavo*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson, London, 1907.

Never was there a narrative dealing with wild beasts and men so absolutely engrossing as this.

Colonel Patterson was the officer entrusted with the construction of the bridge across the Tsavo river. Most admirably was the work done, for it was a wonderful bridge. Surely it is seldom that the building of a thing of stone and iron has been so full of dramatic incident as this. When the reader comes to the passage where the builder watches the first great torrent tear down upon the untried structure, the moment makes him breathless.

It was early in 1898 that Colonel Patterson arrived at Tsavo to build his bridge. The spot was for the time being the rail head, and a considerable camp of labourers (mostly Indian coolies) was established by the banks of the stream. For a while all went well, until one morning it was discovered that a coolie had disappeared from the tent in which he, with others, had been sleeping. No trace of the man could be found. Had he deserted or was there a murderer in the camp? While the mystery was still unsolved another man vanished from his tent during the night, and then another. A sickening terror filled the camp, while at the same time the belief grew that some awful ghoul crept out of the forest at night and bore a living man away.

Another morning dawned and a Jemadar or overseer was missing. About this time the spoor of a lion was noticed near the bivouac, and with it was associated a very horrible sign on the soft earth. It took the form of two parallel furrows, evidently made by the heels of a helpless man who was being dragged away into the bush. The first discovery was of the Jemadar. The

dreadful furrows led to a spot which is described in the following words:

'The ground all round was covered with blood and morsels of flesh and bones, but the unfortunate Jemadar's head had been left intact, save for the holes made by the lion's tusks on seizing him, and lay a short distance away from the other remains, the eyes staring wide open with a startled horrified look in them.'

The camp was thrown into a state of hideous panic. Great bomas or hedges of thorn were built round the tents, fires were kept up all night, while watchmen were occupied in clattering half a dozen empty oil tins suspended from a tree. Nothing availed. There was hardly a night without some horror—a dull thud breaking the stillness as a lion leapt over the boma, frenzied cries and shrieks of terror as a man was dragged out of a tent before the eyes of his comrades, the noise without of the crunching of bones accompanied by the sound of a dreadful purring.

The most sickening episode was in connection with a Bhisti or water carrier. A lion leapt over the thorn fence and by the light of a camp fire hauled the Bhisti from his tent. Colonel Patterson thus describes what follows:

'The Bhisti, it appears, had been lying on the floor, with his head towards the centre of the tent and his feet nearly touching the side. The lion managed to get its head in below the canvas, seized him by the foot and pulled him out. In desperation the unfortunate water carrier clutched hold of a heavy box in a vain attempt to prevent himself being carried off, and dragged

it with him until he was forced to let it go by its being stopped by the side of the tent. He then caught hold of the tent rope and clung tightly to it until it broke. As soon as the lion managed to get him clear of the tent, he sprang at his throat, and after a few vicious shakes the poor Bhisti's agonising cries were silenced for ever. The brute then seized him in his mouth, like a huge cat with a mouse, and ran up and down the Boma looking for a weak spot to break through. This he presently found and plunged into, dragging his victim with him and leaving shreds of torn cloth and flesh as ghastly evidences of his passage through the thorns.'

The reign of terror culminated in December 1898, when the men fled and the railway works came to a standstill for some three weeks.

The lions—for there were two of them—devoured in all twenty-eight Indian coolies, 'in addition to scores of unfortunate natives of whom no official record was kept.'

In the meantime Colonel Patterson, with heroic daring, hunted the lions. He watched night after night, sometimes from a tree, sometimes from a goods wagon or from a crib made of sleepers. Once he spent the night on a stage erected over the body of a half-eaten donkey. At other times he watched from an iron shanty or by the side of a live goat used as a bait. These terrible nights were usually spent alone or in the company merely of a gun-bearer. After many weeks one lion was shot from a staging, while the other was caught in the open. No one can read this stirring narrative without a tribute of profound admiration for the man

who did these things, or without a keen appreciation of the splendid qualities evoked by such 'sport' as this.

During the construction of the railway through most of its sections, troubles incidental to lions were common or, if not actually troubles, at least grievous alarms.

For some years after the completion of the line lions were to be occasionally seen from the railway carriage window. Now, before the clatter and fume of advancing civilisation, the lion is retreating. He is naturally a shy animal, with a leaning towards the stealthy and nocturnal habits of his kinsman the domestic cat. The time when he walks about roaring, seeking whom he may devour, is between twilight and the dawn. In the heat of the day he rests or idles the hours away in the long grass. Moreover, the king of beasts is now anathema. There is a price upon his head and every man's hand is against him. His one hope of living for the term of his natural life is to keep away from the haunts of men, for in every camp and settlement the cry is the same, 'Here is a lion; come, let us kill him.'

Thus it is that, although the country is still, as many affirm, full of lions, the passenger must not regard it as a grievance if he fails to see one in the course of his journey. The engine-driver of a train told me that he had not observed a lion from the line for four years. The possibility of such a spectacle still exists, for when we were 'On Safari' near Longonot in the Rift Valley we had need to follow the railway for a mile or so, and then came upon the spoor of two lions—or, as

the Swahili porters maintained, of a lion and lioness. The marks of the beasts in the soft earth by the side of the permanent way continued for at least 100 yards.

There are still people who, in spite of the engine-driver's experience, see lions from the carriage window. They are mostly ladies past middle life. I am not able to explain, on physiological grounds, why this peculiar gift of sight should be vouchsafed to women of advancing years, but merely record the fact. The reality of the exclusive visions may be perpetuated and possibly intensified by the purchase of a lion skin at Mombasa on the way home. From the description given me by one of these favoured observers of nature, I gather that the animal seen was without a tail.

The lion, his life and times, forms a favourite subject of conversation in British East Africa. It is a subject that, although treated by many with cold precision, appears to excite in others a convulsion of the imagination attended by the output of horrible and alarming facts. The lion has always played a conspicuous part in legends and fables, and that rôle he appears in the minds of many still to fulfil. From the frequency with which certain people meet lions or hear them roar, the exact species common to East Africa may be appropriately described as the ' Multiplying lion.'

The tourist coming to this part of the world is sure to inquire as to the line of conduct that should be observed when a lion is encountered by the way. In answer to such inquiry I was told that the etiquette suitable for the occasion was the following: If the lion when met with is walking in the opposite direction to the tourist,

the animal should be allowed to continue his walk without comment. If, however, the lion stops and stares at the tourist, it is proper that the tourist should 'Shish' the animal away as he would an obtrusive goose on a village green. Should the lion be unmoved by this expression of annoyance, the tourist is advised to throw lumps of earth at the obtuse creature. If after this the lion still fails to realise that he is *de trop*, the tourist is recommended to walk away from the spot with such dignity as the strained position demands.

It will be understood that lion hunting in this country is as often a matter of necessity as a matter of sport. Those who speak from experience state that the tracking down of a lion is a hard and tedious work needing much cunning and involving no little danger. The latter point is made evident by the number of men who have been killed or severely crippled in this daring pursuit. The settler, or the man on a cross-country journey, who tracks down a lion, either alone or with only his gun-bearer for a companion, may well be proud of the title of sportsman, to which designation he does infinite credit; but the big-game hunter, who comes out to Africa to secure the largest possible 'bag' of lions, is very usually a sorry creature.

This would-be hero engages the services of a professional hunter. He is accompanied by an army of porters and beaters and by a perfect arsenal of fire-arms. His methods, according to Captain Stigand, involve 'little danger or trouble.'[1] That author explains that the lion is first of all located and

[1] *The Game of British East Africa*, by Captain Stigand, London, 1909.

rounded up by mounted Somalis, 'after which word is sent in and the sportsman finishes a late breakfast and starts out with a party of rifles to shoot him where he sits. . . . Another way is to have the lion located in cover, such as thick reed bed. The sportsmen, with multitudinous gun-bearers and a large battery, post themselves in advantageous positions, while naked savages with spears are sent in to drive him out.' A third plan is to employ dogs to force the lion out of the cover in which he has been discovered, whereupon Mr. Jingle or M. Tartarin, as the case may be, takes up a position indicated by the professional hunter and shoots at the lion when he appears in the open. It is a simple procedure, because the professional hunter can cover any failures of his employer, but it is not 'Sport.'

At the end of the display it is essential that the hero should be photographed with his foot on the thorax of the prostrate animal. The lion hunter's friends at home need have no anxiety as to his safety. The only danger that is imminent is incurred by the native beaters who have the courage to drive the lion out of his lair.

CHAPTER XII

THE GAME COUNTRY

FROM Tsavo to Kiu is 134 miles. The train takes ten hours to cover this distance, reaching Kiu in the early morning in time for breakfast. In this ten hours, however, the labouring engine has climbed up some 3300 feet, for Kiu stands 4860 feet above the level of the sea. One place of interest is passed in the night—Kibwezi. It was in the old caravan days an important and delectable post. The day was memorable when the porters threw down their burdens at Kibwezi, because one third of the journey to the lake was done and the land of plenty was gained.

At Kiu the traveller will find that he has entered upon a new country, upon the country of the great plains which extend on all sides for unnumbered miles. He sees an open grass land, smooth and undulating, and dotted over, in this district at least, by a legion of small trees. The country calls to mind the high veldt of South Africa, not only in its huge extent, but also in the frequency with which it reproduces the familiar features of the kopje and the donga. The far-away hills are —in the early morning—covered with mist, so that the

scene may suggest to some certain uplands in Scotland. Above all things is the prospect at total variance with the common conception of a primeval wild in the heart of the tropics. The air is brisk and stimulating, and the temperature probably about 70° or less.

Kiu is in the centre of the southern game reserve, so that from the time the day dawns at Sultan Hamud —the station south of Kiu—game of many kinds will be met with in astonishing numbers. The traveller need have no anxiety as to whether he will see many wild animals or not from the carriage window. He may be assured that he will see a great many more than his friends at home will ever be induced to believe in.

There are two game reserves in British East Africa, the Northern and the Southern. They cover together an area greater than that of the whole of Scotland. The Northern reserve, a district of about 20,000 square miles, lies roughly between the Guaso Nyiro river on the south and Lake Rudolf on the north, having for its eastern and western boundaries Uganda and the Lorian Swamp. The Southern reserve, in which Kiu is situated, is limited on two sides by the Uganda railway and the German frontier respectively, and on the other two borders by the Tsavo river and the Great Rift Valley. Its extent is some 10,000 square miles, that is to say, it occupies about the same area as is covered by the combined counties of Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall. According to Captain Stigand, the animals to be found in this reserve are the following: rhinoceros, hippopotamus, giraffe, buffalo, eland, oryx, gnu, lesser kudu, bushbuck, roan, waterbuck, hartebeest,

gazelles, reedbuck, oribi, impala, duiker, klipspringer, steinbuck, dikdik, lion, leopard, cheetah, and zebra.[1] In the Northern reserve are many of the animals above named together with the Abyssinian oribi, Bohor reedbuck, topi, Grevy's zebra, elephant, and greater kudu.

The plains which open out at Kiu reach to Nairobi, a distance of sixty miles. They are known as the Kapiti and Athi plains. As the line advances across the prairie the trees become fewer in number until, at last, there is merely a limitless expanse of rolling grass land, which in the dry season is in tint a lichen grey deepening in places to a jade green. Other colours rise to the vast surface in waves and ripples—streaks of apple green, stripes of biscuit yellow, patches of ruddy brown —as if they marked the deeps and shoals of a windless sea, until at the horizon a faint coast of purple hills is met surmounted by the woolpack clouds of the tropics. The scope of the view is marvellous, while the sense of immeasurable distance is of a kind that can only be felt in the midst of a great sand desert.

Shortly after leaving Kiu on the present journey we came upon a company of giraffes browsing off trees. The sight of these quaint beasts at large produced a curious impression in the minds of those who only associate giraffes with an enclosure in a zoological garden. From Kiu to the very outskirts of Nairobi there was not a moment when big game in numbers could not be seen from the carriage windows. Hartebeests with their curious canter and strangely shaped heads were come upon in hundreds and zebras in thousands. There

[1] *The Game of British East Africa*, by Captain Stigand, London, 1909.

KIKUYU STATION.

[*See* page 107.

THE GAME COUNTRY: MACHAKOS ROAD.

were herds of gazelles, mostly of the kind known as Thomson's gazelle, a little fawn-coloured creature with a wide black stripe slashed obliquely across its side. Ostriches were common, as were also vultures and bustards and birds of unfamiliar genera. Possibly the most interesting animals were two gnu who were disturbed close to the line, and who stared at the train with the dull gaze of bewildered rustics.

It was singular how little notice this assemblage of animals took of the bustling Uganda mail or even of its whistle. Those near at hand trotted away. Those at a distance looked up from their grazing with the languid interest induced by a familiar object, and as if the thought was passing in their brains, 'Here is this thing again that makes a noise.'

Turn a zoological collection loose by the side of the London and South-Western Railway as it runs across a treeless stretch of the New Forest, multiply the details by a thousand, and there will appear a prospect comparable with that to be seen on the Athi plains.

That the game is slowly disappearing in British East Africa under the advance of civilisation is very evident. Those most ancient animals the rhinoceros and hippopotamus are rapidly following the footsteps of the mammoth into the world that was. In no very distant time they will be extinct. Many of the rarer kinds of buck and antelope are also nearing extinction. With regard to the great bulk of the game it is obvious that it must go, and in cultivated lands must go entirely. A settler who has spent money and energy in reclaiming a district does not want his pastures overrun and his

crops looted. It is either settlers or game. Grant's gazelle was once seen in thousands around Lake Naivasha: 'Now,' writes an authority, 'you hardly see a head,' for the reason that the land, to the great advantage of the country, is fortunately being developed.

This inevitable disappearance of the wild animal is materially hastened by the wild sportsman. 'British East Africa,' writes Captain Stigand, 'is the happy hunting ground of the town-bred sportsman, and one meets him everywhere amassing great piles of worthless and immature "heads," 99 per cent. of which are only fit to be thrown on the dust heap.' The big-game shooter comes out to obtain 'a set of heads' for his billiard-room, and these heads, with an appropriate narrative of adventure for each, must be forthcoming, even if he has to resort to the common practice of completing the 'set' by purchase at Aden.

These wild sportsmen, moreover, shoot from mere joy and lightness of heart. Thus on the Sese Islands in the Lake Victoria Nyanza there roams a rare animal (a marsh-dwelling antelope) known as Speke's tragelaph. This fact becoming known to two big-game hunters, they at once made for the islands in canoes, and having landed, killed with the utmost despatch over fifty of these creatures, 'for no other purpose apparently than the mere pleasure of slaughtering a rare and defenceless animal.'[1] It is a pity that a monument cannot be erected on the Sese Islands to perpetuate the memory of these two fine and gallant gentlemen.

[1] *The Uganda Protectorate*, by Sir Harry Johnston, London, 1904, vol. i. p. 77.

It is an obvious economy for sportsmen of the Tartarin school to combine together and make one formidable company, under the guidance of a professional hunter. These co-operative slaughter parties sweep through the game country with the noise of a whirlwind and the mortality of an epidemic. They have with them vast batteries of rifles, endless boxes of ammunition, and many cameras. Of their methods Captain Stigand reports as follows:

'One of the most common malpractices is the long range independent firing at game. Parties of so-called sportsmen turn up and go out in a drove together, each followed by several gun-bearers carrying weapons of assorted sizes, when directly any game is seen, without any pretence at a stalk, fire is opened, and it is positively dangerous to be anywhere in the vicinity.

'Before coming to East Africa I could not have believed that a party could go out and expend perhaps fifty or a hundred rounds of ammunition in a day, and come back brazenly in the evening to be congratulated in bagging an undersized gazelle. No attempt is made to follow wounded animals, and the number of these must be very great.'[1]

This is the sad feature in the contemptible affair—the wounded animal. It would appear that many of these fearsome sportsmen are so little familiar with the rifle that it has been suggested that evidence of their ability to kill game should be forthcoming before a licence is granted. The fact that a man has made

[1] *The Game of British East Africa*, by Captain Stigand, London, 1909, p. 226.

money in the city or by the sale of a patent food does not carry with it the assurance that he can shoot with effect. So, in order that a proper number of 'heads' may be obtained for Mr. Jingle's baronial hall or for the villa at Tarascon, hundreds of animals must be wounded year by year.

The sportsman's licence costs £50. The schedule of the number of animals of each kind which can be killed under that licence may be of interest:

Animals, limited numbers of which may be killed or captured under a sportsman's or public officer's licence:

Kind.	*Number allowed.*
Elephant (having tusk ivory weighing not less than 60 lbs.)	2
Bull buffalo	1
Rhinoceros	2
Hippopotamus	2
Zebra	2
Antelopes and gazelles—	
Class A	
Eland	1
Oryx	2
Hippotragus (sable)	1
Hippotragus (roan)	1
Strepsiceros	2
Topi	2
Neumann's hartebeest	2
Bongo	1
Class B	
Any species other than those in Class A	10
Chevrotains	10
Topi (Jubaland only)	8
Colobi and other fur monkeys	2
Aard-Varks	2
Cheetah	2
Aardwolf	2
Marabout	2
Egret of each species	2

Of the many books on the game of British East Africa the one likely to be of most interest to the general reader is Mr. Dugmore's recent work.[1] It is illustrated by a series of remarkable photographs, some taken by flashlight and some by telephoto lens, which serve to show the animals as they live. Many of these pictures were obtained at no little risk to life, for Mr. Dugmore has shown that ' the hunter with a camera ' is called upon to display sportsmanlike qualities to which the ordinary big-game hunter can lay no claim. To take a photograph of a rhinoceros at a distance of fifteen yards when the animal is charging the camera requires courage of no mean order. Some marvellous photographs of lions approaching a dead beast were taken by flashlight at a distance of from ten to twelve yards, the operator being concealed by a boma or thorn fence. Equally interesting pictures of animals were obtained by posting the camera close to a water hole at night and using the flash as the creatures approached to drink. Mr. Dugmore's pictures of the hippopotamus are among the most realistic in his collection, and serve to recall the curious impression made by the first sight of these quaint beasts. The illustrations in the book serve further to give a very excellent idea of the general aspect of the game country.

The disappearance of the hippopotamus and rhinoceros will mark a regrettable event in natural history. These primitive beasts are hardy survivors of antediluvian times. Under all reasonable circumstances they should long ago have retired into the fossil state.

[1] *Camera Adventures in the African Wilds*, by A. R. Dugmore, London, 1910.

They come from the buried past as the direct descendants of crude elemental forms of life that wallowed in the marshes of an unfinished world. They come from the age when the beasts of the field were cast in rough but gigantic moulds, when tentative shapes were essayed as if they were the products of an exuberant and undecided imagination. They belonged to the time when Nature's workshop was made terrific by colossal models, by experimental monsters, by immature and fantastic conceptions in living clay.

Mr. Dugmore in his remarkable book gives a photograph taken at close quarters of a rhinoceros charging. The animal is terrific not so much in its hideousness as in its aspect of extreme antiquity. It looks as if it had just leaped up from its fossil bed, for earth and stones seem still to be clinging to its hide.

These two vanishing beasts retain certain attributes which may be characteristic of organised beings in the Saurian's day, and which may serve to explain their own bodily survival.

The hippopotamus is the exponent of a brainless inertia which has served it well. It represents a kind of Brobdignagian amoeba with no cerebral faculties beyond a flaccid instinct to live, for it is still little more than a mass of blubber provided with a mouth and floating in a pool.

The rhinoceros is the embodiment of blind conservatism. Its hide is impenetrable, its vision is weak, while its intellect is weaker. It has, however, two marked qualities—combativeness and a sense of smell. It is aroused to its maximum energy by the presence of

anything that is new. This object need not be a thing that is aggressive or inconvenient. Its offensiveness depends upon the fact that it is unfamiliar. When a rhinoceros smells a man he will charge him with maniacal violence, although the man may be merely sitting on a stool reading Milton. The massive beast will dash at him like a torpedo or a runaway locomotive simply because the smell of him is novel.

Actuated by this insane hate of whatever savours of an innovation, the rhinoceros has charged an iron water tank on the outskirts of a camp and has crumpled it up as a blacksmith would an empty meat tin. For like reasons this self-opinionated animal has charged a train on the Uganda Railway and has done much damage to the fabric. Inasmuch as some new object made evident by a smell seems to be the acutest stimulant that can stir the rhinoceros brain, it is terrible to think with what a delirium of fury the conservative beast would come down upon a cheap motor-car encountered in the wilderness.

CHAPTER XIII

MASAI AND MANNERS

A SPECIAL interest attaches to the section of the Uganda Railway now under notice. It runs through the centre of the once dreaded Masai land. The boundaries of this country are not very precise, but roughly they are represented on the north by the Equator and Lake Baringo, on the south by the fifth parallel of latitude, while on the east the district extends almost to the Taru Desert, and on the west to the Lake Victoria Nyanza. The wide territory thus limited includes the mountains of Kenia and Kilima Njaro, the Great Rift Valley, and the immense plateau which dominates this part of the continent. It embraces, indeed, the principal part of what is now known as East Equatorial Africa.

The land traversed by the Uganda Railway is, in nearly its whole extent, land once owned by the Masai; so that if these people could have enjoyed the privileges of ground landlords they would now be the possessors of no mean property. The acquiring of land, however, in Africa has never been conducted upon modern lines. There have been no intricate processes dealing with leases and freeholds, no complex conveyancing, no

vexatious questions as to timber rights, rights of way, or compensation for improvements. The procedure followed has been not only simple, but based upon the earliest known method of acquiring real estate, namely the taking of it by force.

The Masai are a remarkable and interesting race. They are a warlike people of splendid physique and ferocious courage. Proud and domineering as they undoubtedly are, they have had reason for their hauteur, since for unknown centuries they have been the absolute lords and masters of a great part of Central Africa.

It has been already said that the way to the interior of the continent from the coast was barred by a belt of waterless land called the Taru Desert, which blocked the path of the explorer as if by an impenetrable fence. But beyond that barrier was an obstacle still more difficult to overcome. It took the form of the Masai people, armed and alert, and determined to defend the passes through their country at any cost.

The foreign policy of the Masai was dominated by a Monroe Doctrine of a very emphatic character. It may be remembered that the cardinal maxims upheld by President Monroe were these: He declared (1) that his country was not to be considered as a place for colonisation by any European power, and (2) that he should regard any attempt on the part of a European power to make such use of his country 'as dangerous to our peace and safety.' The Masai not only held these views, but were prepared to support them with unflinching rigour and indefinite bloodshedding.

Still, in spite of this political bias, the caravans of

Arab traders made their way at rare intervals into Masai land, and were usually cut to pieces. A few managed to effect a passage, sometimes by lavish bribery, and sometimes by the excellent good fortune of a war which called the Masai away from the district they proposed to traverse.

The first British traveller to march across the Masai country from one end to the other was Joseph Thomson. He accomplished the journey in 1883 and the year following.[1] He overcame the fierce adherence of the Masai to their Monroe Doctrine not by force of arms, nor by mere sophistry, nor by political argument. On the contrary, he broke down their resistance by means of some aperient salts, a magnetic machine, and two false teeth.

As an illustration of Joseph Thomson's methods in practical diplomacy the following episode, which occurred early in the journey, may be quoted. 'The chief visited me in the afternoon, and proved to be a tall lubberly fellow who had not a word to say. Our interview was not therefore very diverting. We sat and stared at each other, till losing patience at the irksome solemnity of the interview, I had to devise means to get rid of him. In this I succeeded, after giving him a dose of Eno's fruit salts backed up by a shock from the magnetic machine.'

Thomson does not seem to have studied medicine, but he took with him certain simple remedies, and, by an inspiration of genius, a common magnetic machine of the type used for giving 'shocks' at elementary

[1] *Through Masai Land*, by Joseph Thomson, London, 1885.

science lectures. With these qualifications and insignia he assumed the position of a *lybon* or great medicine man. Now the Masai appear to be a people who are much interested in any advance or any novelty in the way of medical treatment. They had no doubt tried the exclusive meat diet, the sour milk treatment and every form of breathing exercise, but in Thomson they found not only a new doctor—a charming circumstance in itself—but also a specialist of great power.

While the Masai appreciated Thomson as a medical practitioner, they had also no little fear of him. On the proposition *ex ungue leonem*, they inferred that he could do dreadful things if he liked, and might become very unpleasant if he were irritated. Thus as the great healer Thomson passed through the country in comparative peace, helped in his progress by a conciliatory manner and by the liberal distribution of presents.

The teeth, to which allusion has been made, exercised a powerful moral influence upon the people and were a most important asset in the traveller's equipment. Thomson himself regarded them as 'perfect treasures.' The teeth, two in number, were artificial and were worn by the explorer. He employed them in the following manner. He would show his gums to the impressionable native, would then turn his head, remove the two incisors, and suddenly display the gap. By a like manœuvre he would replace the teeth in his jaw and exhibit them to the onlooker once more *in situ*. This adaptability in the anatomy of the white man afforded such delight to the Masai that when in camp he had to give almost hourly demonstrations of his advanced method of tooth drawing.

The explorer, moreover, was a man who quickly learnt to do at Rome as the Roman does.

He acquired the delicate art of expectorating upon these arrogant people with such thoroughness that they regarded him not only as a courtier, but also as a man of feeling and refinement. 'Spitting,' he explains, 'has a very different signification with the Masai from that which prevails with us. With them it expresses the greatest goodwill and the best of wishes. It takes the place of the compliments of the season, and you had better spit upon a damsel than kiss her.' [1]

He made use of this accomplishment also in his medical work, and gives an account of the procedure he adopted in what may be termed his dispensary practice. The technique will be new both to physicians and to hospital managers. 'As I was a *lybon* (medicine man) of the first water,' he says, 'the Masai flocked to me as pious Catholics would do to springs of healing virtue, and with the aid of occasional draughts of water I was equal to the demand. The more copiously I spat upon them the greater was their delight. It was certainly rather drying work for me when I had a large number to operate upon, and I required the aid of bullets and stones in my mouth to stimulate the production of the precious fluid.'

It must be further reckoned to the credit of Thomson that he was possessed of a very amiable disposition. The traditions and training of the Masai led them to regard all human beings, besides themselves, as garbage, or at least as mean objects but little removed from

[1] *Through Masai Land*, by Joseph Thomson, London, 1885, p. 290.

the beasts of the field. They impressed this view upon Thomson and his followers with great clearness, and at times ordered them about as if they were slaves. 'I had daily to be on exhibition,' writes the much tried explorer, 'and perform for their delectation. "Take off your boots"; "show your toes"; "let us see your white skin" . . . such were the orders which greeted me as they turned me about, felt my hair with their filthy paws, while "Friend, give me a string of beads" was dinned into my ear with maddening persistence. I was actually pulled about as if I was a toy to be played with.'

When Gregory passed through Masai land in 1893, on his way to the Great Rift Valley, he found the country quiet, and was exempt from the annoyances which beset Joseph Thomson. His first meeting with a Masai was unpleasant. It was raining hard, and 'at noon,' he writes, 'I found a deserted Masai kraal and crept for shelter into the only hut that still retained a roof; but it was already occupied—by the bodies of two Masai in an advanced stage of decomposition; so I ate my frugal meal in the rain.'[1]

As to the Masai themselves, it is necessary to understand that the natives in this part of Africa are not negroes, although they are very commonly designated by that name. The true negro can be seen in the Soudan and in the coarse-featured, blubber-lipped black of the West Coast and of the West Indies, but he will not be met with among the native population of Central Africa.

[1] *The Great Rift Valley*, by J. W. Gregory, London, 1896, p. 96.

The negro has a black skin, a long and narrow skull, woolly hair, high cheek-bones, a prognathous lower jaw, a flat bridgeless wide-winged nose and thick everted lips. He is the most simian of men. Certain of the folk in Central Africa, the Bahima for example, are tall, well-proportioned people, handsome and aristocratic looking, whose features are moulded upon lines differing but little from those of the European. On the other hand, the Swahili of the coast and the people of Uganda present features of the negro type, but so far is the type modified that the heavy and brutish element is gone and in its place is a mild and pleasant countenance, intelligent and not lacking in traces of refinement.

An explanation in general terms of the peculiarities of the races in this part of Africa is afforded by the following theory. The aboriginal inhabitant of Africa was no doubt a negro of a type akin to that of the present native of the West Coast. A debased offshoot from this original stock may be represented by the ape-like pigmy of the Congo Forest. In the course of time a strong Caucasian element was introduced into the Dark Continent. These white or brown folk no doubt reached the central parts of the country, partly by way of the Nile and partly by that coast which was nearest to Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

By the admixture of the two races, the Ethiopic and the Caucasic, there resulted the Hamite, whose distinctive features would vary according to the proportion in which the negro element, on the one hand, or the eastern element, on the other, was blended in his ancestry. The purer Hamite would be represented

by the Copts and Fellahin of Egypt, by the Gallas and the Somali, and at a little distance by such people as the Bahima and the Masai. The less pure Hamite, on the other hand, would lean towards the Ethiopic type, and would probably be merged in that division. Races of this latter order would be regarded as a mixture of the West African negro, on the one part, and the Hamite on the other. Among people of this ancestry would be the Bantu, the Zulu Kafir, the Matabele, the Kavirondo, the Swahili, and the native of Uganda.

The Masai, isolated as they were from the greater world by natural barriers on the east and west and by hostile and superior tribes on the north and south, were left to work out their own salvation and to develop into a people with distinctive characteristics.

The Masai are a semi-nomad people, devoted to a man to the arts of war and occupied in times of peace with the rearing of cattle. They possess to this day immense flocks and herds, and may be regarded as a wealthy community. Any number of the members of this tribe will be met with along the Uganda Railway. They are a fine race, tall, well made and athletic. The colour of their skin is chocolate brown. They have well-formed feet and hands. There is no marked projection of the lower jaw, while the nose is so shapely as to be almost Caucasian. Two features less attractive remain to be noticed, namely, somewhat high cheek-bones and prominent, much everted lips with projecting teeth. But for the mouth, which is distinctly ugly, the average Masai would be considered handsome.

The heads of the children, the women, and such

of the men as have ceased to be warriors are shaved. The rest twist their hair into long tags with wool and leather and finish the coiffure with two pigtails, one in front and one behind. The whole head is then liberally dressed with a mixture of grease and red earth.

The young Masai dandy does not, like the European, devote anxious care to his moustache, for he lacks one; nor does the Masai beauty trouble about her complexion, for it cannot be improved upon; but both the young people turn their minds to the beautifying of their ears. The lobe is pierced, and the hole made is steadily enlarged by the insertion of sticks, rods, rings, or blocks of wood, until at last a rent is produced which, in its most exquisite development, will admit all the fingers of one hand if not of both. The lobe of the ear then hangs down in a loop, not unlike the strap in a 'tube' railway carriage to which the strap-hanger attaches himself.

The number and magnitude of the foreign bodies suspended in the ear loop depend upon the fancy and wealth of the owner. The largest ear-ornament that I observed was not in a Masai, but in a Kikuyu. This proud savage was wearing in his ear a white meat extract jar which, inscribed with the virtues of the food, was equal in size to a medium tumbler. The Masai women have hanging from each ear a flat spiral of wire which rests upon the upper part of their chests, and is so universal an ornament as to be distinctive of the race.

Furthermore, the women twist such enormous masses of wire round their necks, shoulders, arms, forearms, and legs that they may be said to be ironclad. A petticoat

of the scantiest completes the costume of both the belle and the matron, for the upper part of the body is bare. The men are rather indifferent as to clothes, since, in addition to a few yards of wire and an assortment of charms, they are content with a cloth—a kind of mud-coloured towel—which is worn, not round the loins, but suspended from one shoulder.

The women are gentle looking, but the men have an air of cool self-confidence little short of disdain. They are fearless, swift of foot, capable of covering immense distances without fatigue, so that from the point of view of the athlete they are as fine a race of men as the world produces. They possess great skill in the use of the bow, carry a curious sword or long knife, while their principal weapon is a heavy spear with a deadly looking blade. With this spear they will face any beast that roams the earth. Sportsmen who know the country well say that the finest spectacle in connection with the pursuit of African game is provided by a party of naked Masai when they track down a lion and kill it in the open with their spears.

I was much impressed with a Masai we came upon when on Safari in the Rift Valley. We had to climb the escarpment to reach the summit of the plateau. The ascent was steep and the path a sorry one. As there was some doubt about the way, a settler was good enough to send one of his Masai after us to act as a guide. This man came up with our party after we had been about an hour on the march. The four white people of the company had dropped to the rear and were toiling up the steep bank, panting and blowing, as they picked

their way with infinite labour and clumsiness among the tumbled rock and bushes. On a sudden the Masai rushed by to head the long and straggling caravan, He was naked but for a blanket hanging from one shoulder, and carried the long spear and peculiar cutlass of his people. He trotted by at high speed as if the rugged incline were a level road, darting among the rocks like a buck, as admirable a specimen of a human being as it is possible to imagine. On this occasion he would be away from his hut a day and a night. An untried white man in his place would soon drop from exhaustion, would certainly lose his way, and as likely as not die of starvation. This man would travel as well in the dark as in the day, would stop for nothing, would find water and food and be prepared to kill anything that came in his path. He was as much at home as a Londoner in Fleet Street, while possibly, if he were dropped down in the great city, he might be as helpless as were we on the side of the escarpment.

While the traveller is in Masai land he should not fail to see a specimen of the Andorobo. The Andorobo are a curious mongrel people who wander about this delectable country like human pariahs, making no settlements and living solely by the chase. They are supposed to be a mixture of the Masai and some low primitive negro stock, such, for example, as is represented by the Bushmen. Although poor and abject enough, they represent a remarkable survival, since they exhibit probably the most faithful reproduction of the neolithic man now to be found on the globe.

They are not an unpleasant-looking people, although

their habits are not inviting, since the game they kill is as often as not eaten raw. They are shorter than the Masai, whom they imitate in the treatment of their hair. Some of the Andorobo incline to the Bushman type, while others are distinctly Hamitic, and few exhibit the ugly mouth which is characteristic of their aristocratic neighbours. Some excellent photographs, both of the Masai and of the Andorobo, will be found in Sir Harry Johnston's interesting work, ' The Uganda Protectorate.'

CHAPTER XIV

NAIROBI

THE Athi plains, where they follow the course of the railway, end at Nairobi, the metropolis and capital of the Protectorate. The town is situated on the flat at the foot of a range of very low hills. It is neither well placed nor well planned. It consists of one creditable central road with eucalyptus trees on either side of it. From this avenue streets are beginning to branch off at right angles, but they do this in a nervous hesitating manner; the majority venture only a few yards, being apparently disheartened by coming upon a slough of mud or an unseemly waste. In the midst of the town is a more determined cross-street, but it is occupied by the Indian bazaar with all its squalor, its niggardliness, its tawdry colour, its mean allurements to snare the gullible natives.

The houses which compose this metropolis of two streets are made, with but few exceptions, of corrugated iron. It is indeed a tin town composed of one-storied shops, of tin shanties, of storehouses and sheds of tin. The Government buildings are a series of corrugated iron huts. There are a few business houses of stone

NAIROBI.

LAKE NAIVASHA: WEST SHORE.

[*See* page 115.

with iron roofs. The hotel is not only of stone, but has a roof of tiles. The one exquisite edifice in Nairobi is the new general post office. It has every quality that makes for magnificence, that is to say, it is built of stone, is without a tin roof, and possesses two stories. It has no uncertain idea as to its grandeur, since it stands alone in a remote meadow as if fearing contamination from the town. It is doubtful if the town in its growth will ever have the courage to approach it.

Nairobi differs in no essential from a hundred other embryo towns in Africa south of the equator. It is a backwood town, a place still rough, unfinished and unhomelike. It has not shaken off the crude raiment of the wilderness. Although it has passed beyond the stage of the encampment it has not yet reached the sober confidence of the abiding city. The capital of British East Africa is in fact a town in the making.

It is like a rough sculptor's model with the supporting sticks still showing through the clay. It may be said to be as little like a real town as a coat in its tentative stage —a raw fabric of uncertain seams and hasty white threads—is like the finished garment. Its architecture is of the kerosene oil tin school whose inspiration is founded upon utility and cheapness. By the side of the tin house the native hut, with its dome of thatch, has dignity as well as the charm of suggested comfort. It would be unfair to criticise Nairobi without making prominent the fact that the site of the town was but a few short years ago a bare plain.

The main street of the metropolis is crowded with rickshaws, mule carts, and ox wagons, with occasional

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cattle and numerous horsemen. The human crowd is made up mainly of natives of the tribe known as the Kikuyu. They form an endless, noiseless, dismal procession. Where they are coming from or where they are going to is not made evident to the casual visitor. Some carry burdens, some do not, while all appear to be drifting along in a kind of purgatorial circle. There will be some Masai in the crowd who wear an air of independence, as well as Swahili folk of all sorts and conditions. In the way, too, will be met Indian traders, fat and waddling, Indian baboos full of importance, as well as Indian coolies with the abject aspect of lost men. To this crowd may fitly be applied the term 'motley,' for when the sun and the eucalyptus trees make bars of light and shade across the way the street is as strong in colour as a jester's tunic.

There are other elements in the crowd which, if not striking in tint, at least leaven the depressing mass in a fashion that is pleasant and reassuring. There are officials in khaki and white helmets, gallant English ladies on foot or on horseback, on bicycles or in trim English pony carts, a European child or two with a black nurse, and, above all, settlers who have come out from the old country to grapple with the new. The latter are a sturdy and a masterful body of men, sunburnt and hardy, who ride like cowboys and can handle a rifle like a sharpshooter. Young though many of them may be, they are the makers of a colony, the pioneers of civilisation, and the men who hold in the hollow of their hands the fortunes of British East Africa.

So here in this one street of Nairobi are the details

that compose the rugged picture of colony making: the purposeless inane herd of wandering natives, the Hindoo Shylock dodging their footsteps, the Government official strong and just, and the British lad glowing with the faith that he can make the wilderness blossom as the rose.

Whatever may be thought of the town of Nairobi, it cannot be gainsaid that the suburbs are charming. They are irregular, as suburbs should be, and are disposed about the slopes of the hills behind the town. The bungalows, with few exceptions, are built with corrugated iron, but the walls and roofs are painted in fervid colours, while much of the structure is softened by a mantle of creepers. Moreover, each house stands in a garden of such luxuriance as to blot out all hard angles and ugly lines. Although they are tin houses, as viewed from the outside, they are within as comfortably fitted and furnished as are houses of like type in England. There is no element of 'roughing it' suggested by these abodes; indeed, there are elements of luxury in the Nairobi bungalow which would be much envied in England. I can recall one villa—of tin, certainly—overlooking the Athi plains, from the verandah of which could be seen, with a field-glass, herds of big game in countless numbers. In sight of the garden also, when the horizon was clear, were the great mountains of Kenia and Kilima Njaro. This same garden was the most beautiful in Nairobi. In the company of a few forest trees and many native flowers were masses of English roses, with among them the Blush Rambler in great magnificence. In this garden were creepers, brilliant with blossoms, that

might have buried the palace of the Sleeping Beauty; while the geranium flourished as a weed that never tired of flowering. Colour of the most gracious kind was bestowed by beds of carnations and of phloxes, by heliotrope and violets, by snapdragon and delphiniums, by chrysanthemums and peonies.

The kitchen garden, too, was not less remarkable. It would have shocked and bewildered the English gardener by its exhibition of the reckless manner in which vegetables, usually regarded as methodical and homely, were capable of behaving. They dared to do things on that hill side that no orthodox guide to gardening would sanction for a moment. Encouraged by an indulgent climate they were running wild, taking heed neither of times nor seasons, nor of those grandmotherly precautions which have ever been considered essential to their good. Such was the air of improvidence that the garden seemed to be a kind of horticultural gambling resort, where a lavish outpouring of wealth and a lapse into riotous living would be followed by destitution or premature senility. Here, on the heights above Nairobi, the cabbage is a roué, the turnip is worn with dissipation, and the onion is living like the prodigal son. It is a fast life, if possible a merry one, for there is no spring to gather strength in, no autumn in which to reflect over the past, and, above all, no winter in which to rest and repent.

Although hard things have been spoken of Nairobi it has many advantages. It stands at a height of 5450 feet above the sea level—an altitude greater than that of Zermatt. The climate is delightful, not merely

for a few months in the year, but for all the year round. It is a fine, stimulating climate, like that of a perfect English summer. The sun is hot at noon, the mean average midday temperature being 78° F., but it is a dry heat that is never enervating. The nights are cool, and indeed possibly cold, for the temperature now and then sinks to 45° F. The average rainfall is 40·3 inches. The rainy seasons are two, being represented by April and May at the outsetting of the year and by November and December at its close. The remaining months are usually dry, although the times of the rains may be extended beyond the periods named. July, August, and September are described as cold months, but not in the English sense.

The country is healthy. There are no mosquitoes and no malaria. There is no prevailing disease. The death rate is given as 17·5 per 1000 (for 1908). It is not in reality so high as this, for to Nairobi, as being a great centre possessed of a good hospital, are brought such of the sick and injured from the surrounding districts as can be conveyed thither. The sanitary condition of the town has been improved, while the water supply is good if somewhat insufficient. The town has the advantage of a comfortable hotel and of excellent English shops. It has also a racecourse, golf links, tennis courts, and grounds for cricket and football.

There are some 700 Europeans in Nairobi, the entire population of which is stated to be about 14,000. Moreover, not less than 400 European farmers have settled in the immediate neighbourhood of the town.

Last of all, it should be said that the country around

Nairobi is picturesque and interesting, that roads are advancing into the wild, and that no place in British East Africa affords a better centre from which to make a safari or cross-country expedition.

The question is often asked, 'Is British East Africa a white man's country?' So far as the low-lying coast belt is concerned it certainly is not. It would be impossible for a European to lead an active outdoor life in a place like Mombasa without soon being stricken down. Officials and men of business do their work in the coast towns, it is true, but they live as white folk live in India or Ceylon. Fortunately the main part of the Protectorate consists of elevated plateaux which reach to the height of 8000 or 9000 feet in certain districts. These vast highlands may be considered to commence at Kiu and to extend across the Nandi escarpment and Uasin Gishu plateau to the borders of Uganda.

The whole of this immense area is healthy, is free from malaria or other tropical diseases, and has the advantage of what Sir Harry Johnston terms 'a well-nigh perfect climate.' This is undoubtedly a white man's country. The many settlers I have met proclaim it; while their appearance fully justifies the faith that is in them. European children do well, not only children born in the Protectorate, but those also who have been brought out to the country while still young. The boys and girls whose homes are in the uplands have as robust an aspect as have the children of a temperate zone. It must be remembered that a great number of the stations on the plateaux have an elevation of over 6000 feet, while not a few stand at a height between 7000 and

8000 feet. There are variations of climate, therefore, within a comparatively small area, a circumstance of importance to those who from time to time experience the need of change. Thus the folk at Nairobi who feel unduly the burden of the day can by a railway journey of three hours reach an altitude of 7400 feet, while such bracing spots as Kijabe, Naivasha, and Nakuru are all within 120 miles of the capital town.

Although British East Africa is fortunate in the matter of its uplands, the fact remains that the country is on the equator, and that those who live in it are exposed the whole year round to the rays of a vertical sun. The white man who would live here in health must needs live at a fairly high standard of comfort. The period of 'roughing it' should be short. He should be well housed and well fed and should limit his hours of work. In fact, he must live at greater ease than he would live in England. Above all things he must have change. One factor that injuriously affects the European in Central Africa is monotony. The climate is monotonous; the country, with its vast plains or its unvarying bush, is monotonous; while life in an out-station or in a very small community is more monotonous still. These conditions are recognised by the Emigrants' Information Office, in whose Handbook appears this warning: 'Persons having no means are strongly advised not to come out to East Africa, for it is most important that new-comers should have sufficient money to provide themselves with substantial houses and simple comforts.'

In tropical countries occupied by Europeans there arise in the course of years certain traditions as to the

care of the health which are handed down from one generation to another. These traditions, after a while, take the form of a definite code or system to be followed by those who would dwell in the land and live. In India such a system has long since been evolved. It constitutes now the 'custom of the country,' and as such regulates the dress, the food, and the manner of living to be observed by all who find themselves in the vast dominion. British East Africa is so young a settlement that such traditions have not yet been established. Since the climate is so like that of an English summer, it is inferred that the white man can disport himself as he would at home. Wisdom in all these things will come.

One effect of the high altitude and the equatorial sun is noteworthy. These combined conditions tend to produce a disturbance of the nervous system, whereby the individual becomes ' neurotic,' irritable, moody, fanciful and possibly melancholic. Such phenomena are more than the mere products of isolation and boredom, for they occasionally lead to a nervous breakdown which renders the subject unfit to continue with his work. There is little doubt but that these troubles will vanish when those who come to this part of the world have—like Browning's Grammarian—' Before living learnt how to live.'

CHAPTER XV

THE PREHISTORIC MEN

THE train after leaving Nairobi for the lake climbs upwards on to that great plateau which bounds the eastern side of the Rift Valley. So steep is the ascent that more than one hour is occupied in traversing the fifteen miles which separates Nairobi from the next station on the line—Kikuyu. The way is through a rich and beautiful country, partly forest, partly down land, a country lavishly cultivated, abounding in flocks and herds and made companionable by the thatched huts of countless natives. Kikuyu, raised to the height of 6700 feet, occupies a superb position. It commands an outlook over deep green woods and park-like stretches of grass that, with many a knoll and valley, slope down to an immeasurable plain. Bounding the plain are hills so far removed that they look like a line of resting clouds. It is from this height, when the day is clear, that a view of Mount Kenia can be obtained. The station is one of the prettiest on the line, being made brilliant by a gorgeous garden and sheltered by a line of black wattle trees. There can be little doubt that in times to come a great town will bear the name of Kikuyu,

for this spur of the plateau is an enviable dwelling-place.

A crowd of natives will assuredly be met with at the station. They are drawn thither partly by idle curiosity, partly by vanity (for the stranger views them with unconcealed interest), and partly by greed, for that same stranger may possibly give them cents or even half a rupee. They may be looked upon as specimens of neolithic people, as prehistoric folk to whom History is not, and who grin at you across a gulf of many thousands of years. Time has changed, but they have not. If Julius Caesar had landed in East Africa instead of in Kent, he would have found the inhabitants who opposed him the same as the tourist finds them to this day. With some slight remoulding of features, with some change in the tint of the skin and in the matter of the hair, these natives at Kikuyu station may be the early inhabitants of Britain, the round barrow men who watched the disembarking of the Roman legions fifty-five years before the birth of Christ.

The Kikuyu are a people of pleasant countenance, with well-formed features and a complexion which may be described as a chestnut brown. There is little of the negro about them. They are not tall, are slightly and finely made, and form as graceful a presentation of the human figure as will be found among the races of men. The hair is worried into cord-like ringlets, after the manner of the Masai, the coiffure being completed by a liberal laying on of red earth and grease. A limp mud-coloured cloth hanging from one shoulder constitutes their sole garment, but they are richly adorned

A KIKUYU.

with bead necklaces, with anklets and bangles, and with brilliant arm rings. The pendant lobe of the ear is pierced and the hole gradually enlarged by the introduction of iron rings and blocks of wood until, as already said (p. 94), the rent may take all the fingers of the hand. The height of fashion is reached when the lobes of the ears can be made to meet under the chin. A jam-pot, a tooth-paste jar, a curtain ring, or a lady's boot heel all constitute dainty and up-to-date forms of ear ornament. Fashion, of course, reaches its subtlest finish in the metropolis of Nairobi. I noticed there that to be very *chic* one should discard all pendants, or even so modest a thing as a cartridge case suspended by a safety pin, and merely loop the elongated lobe over the pinna or external part of the ear just as one would hang a strap over a peg. Some of the men watching the train carried bows and arrows and some spears, while the majority were content with staves or sticks.

These natives are a quiet, dreamy kind of people, with a picturesque air of melancholy about them. They have evidently cultivated the arts of idleness for many centuries with some success. Their melancholy is probably due to the fact that the Masai have ever regarded the Kikuyu as the scum of the earth, and, acting upon this depressing view, have treated them with considerable baseness. If a young Masai had a new spear given him as a wedding present, he would at once be off to the hills to try it on a few Kikuyu. Moreover, in any new experiment pertaining to the art and science of war, these soft-skinned natives seem always to have been made use of as the *corpus vile*.

The approach of the simple savage to the joys and blessings of civilisation does not furnish an attractive spectacle. His earliest ambition probably is to get drunk, and following upon this is a desire to adorn his body. In this latter quest the first article of clothing that the native strives to obtain is an umbrella. With this in his possession he may claim to have stepped from the Bronze Age into the twentieth century. The umbrella is carried about as a kind of baptismal symbol or sign of regeneration. After the umbrella come cravings of a less discriminating character founded largely upon opportunity. These may lead to the acquiring of a bowler hat, of an elastic-side boot, of a dress coat, of a sailor's jersey, or of a pair of corsets. A man with any one of these items of raiment upon him becomes at once a distinguished person.

The most finished picture of the savage in the act of emerging from the darkness presented itself at a place called Elmenteita. The man thus blessed wore his hair in rope-like ringlets which were dripping with oil and red ochre. His head as a result had exactly the aspect of a rust-coloured mop. His face was smeared with grease of the same hue. In the lobes of his ears were round blocks of wood which may have been sections of a flag pole. Into the upper part of each auricle three white sticks were thrust like quills in a pincushion. His feet and legs were bare. These items all belonged to the old Adam, to his prehistoric period. The symbol that marked his entrance into light was a top-coat of the kind known as a Chesterfield. The garment may have belonged to the time of the Georges, for it had

probably cut a dash in the Mall or at Ranelagh or at the Old Steyne at Brighton. Its original colour could only be surmised, since the sun had bleached the foppish skirt, while the shoulders, breast, and back of the garment were soaked with the red grease which trickled from the native's locks. The collar of the coat was turned up in a very rakish manner.

This enlightened person kept aloof from his fellows, viewing with chilling dignity any naked savage who approached him. He leaned negligently against the trunk of a tree with one leg crossed over the other in the familiar attitude of the early Victorian photograph. In one hand he held—as do the subjects of the *carte de visite*—a walking-stick, while in the other he grasped a shapeless military helmet, the peculiarity of which was that it was much dirtier inside than out. His face was maintained in a state of sickliness by a languid smile, a smile so affected that the man may have been possessed by the soul of the 'pretty fellow' who with eyeglass, clouded cane, and amber snuff-box first swaggered forth in the natty Chesterfield. The history of the life and times of this venerable coat would be of consummate interest, for it is a long way from Bond Street to the Rift Valley and from Beau Brummell to a grease-covered Kikuyu.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY

BEYOND Kikuyu the way is through an enchanting forest, more wonderful and more beautiful than any alley of green the train has traversed. The trees, tall and slim, rise out of a reckless mass of undergrowth, their gaunt trunks appearing as grey poles against the deep, impenetrable shadows. It is so dark and mysterious a place that, if there were a path in the thicket, one would expect to see there, not affrighted natives, but a procession of cowled figures making their way into the gloom. It is curious in this un-English-like spot to meet with patches of bracken as well as banks covered with nasturtiums in blossom.

Suddenly, while the eye is still oppressed with the heavy greens and purples of this pass in the forest, the train runs out into the open and there is seen, as from a mountain top, an incredible valley, a rift in the earth, so deep, so enormous, so awful, that the train, now on the brink of a precipice, seems about to leap into space.

It is no need to be told that the valley stretches far beyond the horizon; it is little gain to know that its width is over 40 miles or that its floor is sunk to the

depth of 2000 feet, for the immensity of the Great Rift Valley seizes upon the imagination at once, and no figures can intensify the astounding impression.

The strangest feature in the spectacle is the sudden loss of all colour. From beneath the dense green arches of the wood which shut out the very sky one breaks into a world of flimsy mist spread out at one's feet apparently miles below. It is an unfamiliar world, blanched and pallid, and lit by a light whiter than that of the sun. The walls of the valley are a spectral grey, its floor is unsubstantial as a cloud, while the gaping volcanoes springing from that floor may be but mounds of vapour. Trees near at hand stand out black against the nebulous abyss, as clean cut as the rigging of a ship against the moon. The solid details of trunk and bough make the land beyond them more than ever illusive and unreal. There are no tints in this phantom valley that belong to the solid earth, no firm outlines of boulder or crag, no substance underlying its level plains and its mirage-like hills. It is a valley of suggestion, a valley of faint memories, of things partly forgotten. I doubt if any scene in the world can produce a sensation so novel and unexpected as that which is aroused by the first glimpse of the Great Rift Valley from the heights of Lamoru.

This astonishing trough starts from near the northern end of Lake Nyassa, about the latitude of 10° S., and running in a north-easterly direction glides into the sea at Tajurra Bay, in the Gulf of Aden, about 10° north of the equator.

The Titanic gulley is nearly straight, and has a

length of some 1800 miles, so that if located in Europe it would extend from London to Constantinople. It varies in width from thirty to fifty miles, being bound on the east side by the Kikuyu and Leikipia escarpments and on the west by the escarpment of Mau. The walls of these escarpments are lofty and precipitous, being in places almost vertical.

In the level floor of the valley are many lakes, notably those of Naivasha, Elmenteita, Nakuru, Hannington, Baringo, and Sugota, with above all the great Lake Rudolf. It presents also immense extinct volcanoes, such as Suswa and Longonot, and the active volcano of El Burro. At its southern end the valley has an elevation of 2500 feet. It reaches its greatest height at Naivasha (6300 feet) and then drops downwards to the sea level, being only at a height of 1200 feet when Lake Rudolf is come upon. The immense plateaux through which the valley cuts its way attain to between 8000 feet and 13,000 feet in the region of British East Africa. The Rift Valley indeed is a terrific trench slashing the continent of Africa, a great gash or rent in the solid flank of the world. If there were inhabitants in Mars it might appear to them as akin to one of the so-called 'canals' which traverse that much discussed planet.

The Rift Valley was discovered by Dr. Fischer early in 1883 and was elaborately investigated by J. W. Gregory ten years later. Gregory in his work deals with the formation of this gigantic moat.[1] He points out that it is no ordinary valley. The commonplace valley is made by denudation and erosion, is sinuous

[1] *The Great Rift Valley*, by J. W. Gregory, London, 1896.

in its course and is bounded by walls which are sloping and rounded. The Rift Valley, on the other hands is straight and sharply cut, while its walls are parallel and nearly vertical. It has been formed, in fact, by no gentle running river, but is the outcome of an appalling cataclysm in the course of which the great earth was cracked and rent asunder. At one time the plateaux on either side of the valley were continuous; then came the moment when the immense tableland was split by two parallel rifts, running north and south, so that a block of material, thirty to forty miles wide, subsided vertically between them and dropped into the bowels of the earth to the depth of some 2000 feet. Surely this was one of the most astounding convulsions that the world has ever witnessed, and of this mighty lesion the Rift Valley remains as the white scar.

The train continuing westwards descends from the plateau by a zigzag road and reaches the floor of the valley at Naivasha. The details of the valley become gradually more distinct. The precipitous side of the escarpment is densely wooded and forms a confining wall of the deepest green. The floor of the valley is smooth and covered with grass, while forty miles away on the other side of the great depression can be seen the towering heights of the Mau escarpment, but so pale and faint are they that they may be made of ice with a purple glow upon it.

The view across the valley from the foot of the escarpment shows in the foreground a green belt of dwarfish trees, beyond which is a plain as level as a lake. The grass is dried up at the moment for lack of rain,

so the colour of the ground is a faded yellow with streaks and patches of bright brown in it, while the shadow of the passing cloud stains each surface that it touches a claret red.

The most conspicuous object in this part of the Rift Valley is the extinct volcano of Longonot. It is an immense isolated mountain rising abruptly from the plain with a crater on its summit. It is a mountain very difficult to get rid of, since it is possible to travel in the valley in one direction for a week and yet not pass out of sight of Longonot. Seen close at hand it is a burnt-up cone curiously bare of vegetation. Its sides are deeply scored with a thousand gullies and ravines which run vertically from crater to base, and which are as precisely outlined as the ridges and furrows of a pleated cloth. These terrific channels give the mountain a shrivelled or wrinkled appearance, and were Longonot in England there is no doubt that these fissures would be recognised by legend as the scratch marks of the Devil's nails.

THE LAUNCH ON LAKE NAIVASHA.

CHAPTER XVII

A SAFARI IN THE RIFT VALLEY

A LITTLE way beyond Longonot is the town of Naivasha. It stands in the floor of the Rift Valley by the eastern border of Lake Naivasha. The little settlement has many advantages. It is admirably placed, it commands a delightful view of the lake, it is healthy and possessed of a perfect climate. Mosquitoes happily do not frequent the valley, so malaria is unknown. Moreover, Naivasha lies on the railway and is the centre of a singularly rich and attractive country. It may be safely predicted that it will rise to a position of eminence and become, in the course of years, one of the prominent towns of British East Africa.

At present it may escape notice as a town or even as a village, so very embryonic is its condition. It consists of a few corrugated iron buildings dotted vaguely about a slight slope. These houses are innocent of any adornment, for Naivasha has not yet recognised paint as a vehicle for decoration. No suggestion of any street is in evidence, the settlement being still without form and void. There is a 'boma' or laager of a kind in which is a post office, also a goods store and a little

cottage-like hotel which is very comfortable. Such is Naivasha in the days of its youth. When it comes to possess a classical town hall, an opera house, a lake shore parade, and a pier with a bandstand at the end, it may look back upon this toddling period with some satisfaction.

Naivasha lake is roughly twelve miles long and the same in breadth at its widest point. The eastern shores of the lake are somewhat bare, but the western shores are well wooded and are fringed with immense beds of papyrus. It is a fresh-water lake, famous for the blue lotus which covers its shallows, for its many hippopotami and its thousands of wild ducks. The lake as viewed from the would-be town is a gracious stretch of water. Its banks are a dainty green, its surface a metallic purple, its background a semicircle of hills which rise tier upon tier until they reach, far up in the sky, the summit of the great Mau plateau. It is in the early morning that the prospect is the most fascinating, for the distant heights then stand out with strange distinctness, while the whole scene—the lake, the fringe of papyrus, the plain and the wooded foot hills—is of one colour, as if seen through a glass of hyacinth blue.

It was arranged that, starting from Naivasha, we should make a journey through the Rift Valley or, in the language of the country, should go 'on safari' in this particular district. The term 'safari' is, I understand, the Swahili for caravan. It is a word of conspicuous elasticity. As a noun it implies a cross-country journey, as well as the equipment for and the personnel of such an expedition. It appears as an adjective at times, for there are individuals described

as 'safari porters,' while as a verb one hears of those 'who have safaried' to this place or that.

The essential features of a safari is that all things needed—food, tents, and promiscuous outfit—are carried not by hand but by head, that is to say, by a number of porters who bear their burdens on their skulls. The modern safari involves an organisation which is elaborate and rather wonderful. Although it necessitates camping out or living in the open, it implies no question of 'roughing it.' Indeed, an expedition conducted by such safari providers as the Boma Company of Nairobi is not only free from any element of discomfort, but may be described as luxurious as well as exempt from even trivial worries.

Our first camp being already pitched on the western side of the water, we crossed to that shore from Naivasha in a steam launch placed on the lake by the enterprise of Captain Attenborough, R.N. It was an excellent launch with a crew of three natives. The most unusual of these was a Kikuyu who would rank, I imagine, as the third officer, or possibly as the steward or cabin boy. He was naked but for a blanket, being at the same time adorned with amazing earrings, neck ornaments, and bracelets. His hair was 'done' in ringlets soaked in red grease, the coiffure being completed by two small ostrich feathers stuck jauntily in the wool.

As the launch was lying at anchor a few yards from the shore, we had to reach it in a small boat. With us was a live sheep destined to provide the party with food until some game could be shot. The sheep showed a general dislike to boats, but was calmed in time by the ministrations of the Kikuyu, in whom she appeared

to have confidence. This able man, by wading in the water, managed to push the boat clear of the mud. On boarding the launch he squatted on the roof of the engine-room, picked some leeches off his bare legs with minute care, took a pinch of snuff out of a coffee tin, and then smiled at us with an air of great contentment. The characteristics of this man were evidently a deep tranquillity of mind and a sense of humour. He smiled at the company at intervals. It was an inconsequent smile, but very infectious. I gave him a rupee for no especial reason except that he was neolithic. It was a regrettable gift, for next day he went to a farmhouse and purchased from an old woman a pair of discarded elastic-side boots. His next purchase will no doubt be a bowler hat, and then the neolithic air that clings to him will vanish.

A considerable time was occupied in poling the launch through the acres of blue lotus flowers with which the shore is fringed. When deep water was reached the lake was as smooth as a mirror, and the voyage of some twelve miles or so was a journey to be remembered. The camp was pitched near the shores of a green bay, the landing being by a channel cut through a dense thicket of papyrus. The spot must have been of some note in days gone by, for I found on the ground a number of rough arrow heads fashioned from obsidian and precisely resembling the prehistoric implements met with in Quaternary deposits in England.

The camp appeared to be large, since our party consisted only of four persons. There were altogether seventy porters and boys, three ponies, a mule, and the short-lived sheep. A separate dining tent was carried,

THE SAFARI ENTERING THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY.

while to each living tent was attached a canvas annexe for a bath.

The marching was done in the early part of the day in order to avoid the heat of noon. It was customary to start as soon after sunrise as was possible and to reach the site of the next camp in time for luncheon.

The first march was a short one of ten miles, the destination being a point on the southern end of the lake. The caravan kept to the shore on this trek, passing through an exceedingly picturesque country with the water ever in view and Longonot ever in the distance. Woods and downs, low hills and shallow valleys, mimosa and grass made up the elements of the scenery.

We followed a 'road' all the way, a well-known and ancient road which would probably date from the days when the Romans laid down the Icknield Way in England. It was a track not constructed by professed roadmakers, but made by thousands of bare feet tramping to and fro for hundreds of years. Its average width was twelve inches, for the native travels in single file. It was never straight, since the savage has no idea of a short cut, time being with him of little account. It was a smooth, mud-coloured path that twisted in and out through the grass as if it had been the trail of an absent-minded snake. Its unintelligible curves represent, no doubt, the manœuvre of the primary traveller to avoid a tree or a rock, but the tree has long since vanished, and the rock has crumbled into dust, yet the way is as crooked as ever. There was something very fascinating about this road with its mystery, its cunning, its

determination and its primeval simplicity. It fascinated the eye as a chalk line fascinates a mesmerised fowl. It was impossible, indeed, to look away from it, for the grass being long the trail was easily missed.

We passed at one place a large party of Kikuyu on the march. They were evidently changing camp, for they carried all their earthly possessions on their bent backs, and heavy enough burdens they seemed. Among them were old men and maidens, young men and children, the grandmother shrivelled as a dried date, the sleeping baby lolling like a great brown caterpillar out of a bag on its mother's shoulders. They came on in single file, silent, dogged and melancholy. They kept their eyes fixed upon the mud-coloured road and upon the pair of mud-coloured heels that moved immediately in front of them. It was a doleful, sombre procession of half-naked folk, but it had one supreme interest—it was by just such migratory bands as these that the world was peopled. These wanderers were merely seeking a new camp, but the file of men and women would have looked the same had they been seeking a new world. In the van, no doubt, was the same kind of leader as led the primitive emigrants when the earth was young, the man with an imagination and a restless brain.

Our second camp was in the open part of the Rift Valley on the lake edge of that level plain of grass which seemed to extend into infinity. The 'outfit' was just such an one as has been many times described. The camp fire is placed in the centre of the ground with the porter's tents arranged in line on one side and the white folk's tents on the other. The ponies are tethered

CAMP IN THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY.

KIKUYU ESCARPMENT AT KIJABE.

close to the fire for their better protection. Lions, although much attracted by a slumbering pony, are in greater degree discouraged by a crackling fire. It had been reported that lions, theoretical or real, were in the vicinity of the present camp, as also of the one we had left.

It was at night-time that the camp looked its best. The camp fire made the tents a lurid red and threw fantastic shadows across the level ground. The *askari* or watchman who stood on guard looked like a man fashioned out of glowing metal. He was so still that he might have been a ragged bronze figure just out of the furnace, yet his shadow, thrown by the flames, fluttered like a flag in a wind. The porters had constructed smaller fires in front of their tents whereat they cooked their meat. This same was usually zebra flesh, which was spitted in unwholesome lumps on a sharpened stick and inclined over the flames until the morsels looked like masses of greasy coal. They squatted round the fire, incessantly jabbering, a company of apish gnomes, since it was only when the light fell upon a bare knee or an outstretched arm that they appeared to be human. They were as nearly like a party of cave men as could be imagined, for if they had been clad in skins and if the meat were the flesh of the cave bear the picture would need little amendment.

The days were pleasantly warm, but the nights were cold. This cold was comparative rather than real, inasmuch as the lowest temperature noted was 56° F., the hour of the observation being five in the morning.

The next march was nineteen and a half miles along

the valley to Kijabe. As I did this on foot I found it long enough. The caravan followed no track, the ground was as rough as a Scottish moor, and the way entirely uninteresting. We broke camp at 6.45 A.M. and reached Kijabe at 1.15 P.M., so the pace was about three miles an hour.

Near Kijabe we came upon a relic of great interest —the old caravan road that led, through 703 weary miles, from Mombasa to the lake. It is a rough and narrow track little more than a path, yet it has played a desperate part in the history of eastern Africa. It was the way of the pioneers, a road made in very truth by the sweat of men's brows. Along this road it was that the Arab trader came with consummate daring and insistence. It was by this trail that bands of slaves had been driven to the coast. It was by this stumbling road that tons of ivory came seawards from the hinterland. This was the trail followed by the first white men who made their way from Mombasa to Uganda. The road is the immediate precursor of the Uganda railway. There has been no intermediary stage of development between the forest path made by the pressure of bare feet and the road of iron. Near Kijabe the two run side by side, a curious conjunction.

It is by Kijabe, from about the level of the old caravan road, that one of the most magnificent views of the Great Rift Valley can be obtained. Standing on the side of the Kikuyu escarpment, the eye travels across a level plain for forty miles until the immense rampart of the Mau plateau is reached. Close at hand is the sheer green wall, strengthened by immense forest-clad

bastions, that shuts in the valley on the east. Below and beyond are the foot hills descending in steps to the floor of the valley. Those which are nearest are a gentle green, those farther away change to a ruddy brown, the colour of dead bracken. Those still more remote are fawn or dove-coloured, while the hillock that steps out alone into the white plain is a rose pink.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE SAFARI

AFTER a night at Kijabe the march was along the Kidong Valley. This is a chine or ravine traversed by a small river which, arising among the Kikuyu hills, loses itself in the waste of the Great Rift Valley. The glen of the Kidong slopes downhill through a pleasant wood for some six miles. When that distance is covered it opens out upon the dead flat of the Rift. As the end is neared the trees become scantier, smaller, and ultimately shabby, so that by the time the plain is reached the once delightful wood is reduced to some miserable outcast scrub. On the floor of the Great Valley itself there is nothing but lichen-grey grass relieved by the white bones of dismembered zebra.

While the caravan was emerging into the open it was possible to see what a safari looks like when on the march. The men were all together and in single file. They formed a curious, disintegrated and disreputable-looking column which, with some modifications, could have served in a tableau to depict the Forty Thieves marching off with their plunder. They were of all heights and sizes, while their clothing was miscellaneous.

The garments might have been gathered from the refuse heaps of Europe. Bare legs and 'shorts' were more or less *de rigueur*, but many affected skirts and even Zouave trousers. Putties were popular, but it was not necessary that a man should wear them on both legs, nor that they should be of the same colour. Above the hips they wore jerseys, Norfolk jackets with the sleeves cut off, frock coats similarly treated, a solitary striped waistcoat, mackintoshes, blankets, shirts of many colours, smoking jackets, tennis jackets, a burnoose, a military cloak, a once white smock, or mere rags of undeterminable origin. Probably in no community are the laws of fashion less strict than with safari porters, for none need have occasion to be worried with the problem 'what to wear.'

There was uniformity in one thing—each man wore a turban upon the top of which he carried his load. The orthodox load of sixty pounds was made up in a very incongruous fashion. The food boxes were the most seemly, then came tents and portions of tents, with poles sticking out like knitting needles from a ball of wool. Other bundles would be made up in some such manner as the following: a steamer trunk with a sack of potatoes and a cooking pot on top of it; a 'hold-all,' fresh from the Army and Navy Stores, tied up with a native guitar and a cooked leg of zebra with much of the skin still on it; a tin uniform case surmounted by a harte-beest's head in process of curing, a teapot, two kettles, and a bag of rice; a smart kit-bag bound up ignominiously with a spade, two buckets, part of a tent, and certain long sticks with lumps of black meat on them partly roasted.

There were two Kikuyu in the party, the lamp boy and the man with the sheep. They kept always in the van, and as they knew the country as a cabman knows London, they were good men to follow. The lamp boy carried a pole on his shoulder, from either end of which the lamps used at night were suspended. As a counterpoise he held in the opposite hand a heavy pail. The man with the sheep was a gentle-looking creature with the figure of Apollo, the god of shepherds. He was naked save for a blanket hung from one shoulder, and the symmetry of his limbs was perfect. He had the curious gazelle-like eyes of his folk. He walked with an easy springing stride that had great dignity in it. Over his head a red cloth was arranged in such fashion as to look like a cowl. He carried a long staff in one hand, while by the other he led the sheep. This man, who belonged to the days of the Bible, was the most picturesque figure in the column, for he was the only one who was in harmony with the scene. The sheep followed the man with the bearing of a humble friend. It was a piebald native sheep, its colours being horse chestnut and écru. It had a double chin and an unamiable temper.

Our camp that night was by the Kidong river, where we were hospitably entertained by an English gentleman who had settled in the Rift Valley to breed sheep and had built there a comfortable house. Longonot, which had been with us many days, was left behind, but we were now in sight of the extinct volcano of Suswa, an immense flat mountain some ten miles wide, with a terrific ragged crater on its summit like a hole in a burst

shell. The same is reputed to be the largest silent crater in the world.

The Kidong is a tiny but rapidly running river of excellent water, shaded all the way by the greenest of bushes. It is a place frequented by lions, no less than seven having been put up during the last organised lion hunt. From the number of zebra bones in the vicinity it may be assumed that the lions lie in wait by the stream when the zebras come down to drink at dusk.

It must have been about this spot that Joseph Thomson camped on his journey through Masai Land.[1] He was the second white man to enter the Great Rift Valley. This, be it remembered, was not in the days of the Phœnicians, but in 1883. Thomson had had an exceedingly arduous march. He had come through the Kikuyu forest and down the escarpment. His men had been on their feet since morning without either rest, food, or water. 'As we reached the bottom,' writes Thomson, 'the shades of evening began to gather, and still the watering place was not reached. Men were falling down exhausted with their great loads. Everyone was looking after himself, and pressing forward to slake his thirst. Suddenly we were all thrown into confusion by an extraordinary event. Lions attacked the donkeys and killed several. The porters threw down their loads and fled. Donkeys were doing the same, kicking off their burdens and braying lustily with fear. Many of these, breaking through the bushes, were taken for lions by the panic-stricken porters and shot down. The cattle got away from all control

[1] *Through Masai Land*, by Joseph Thomson, London, 1885.

and crashed through the brake, adding further to the chaos.'

After leaving his camp by the river, and while proceeding along the Kidong Valley by the way we had come, Thomson's party was again disturbed by meeting a herd of ten elephants. A little further on, when near Lake Naivasha, a third perturbation was produced by a company of buffaloes. It is not to be wondered that Thomson on arriving at the lake determined that, for a while at least, he would rest.

It rained in torrents during the whole of the night we spent by the Kidong. This was the first rain that had fallen for very many months in the Rift Valley. It was as valuable as a shower of gold, and if we failed to rapturously appreciate its worth, the fact must be ascribed to narrowness of mental vision. The march on the following morning was to Lamoru, a distance of fifteen miles. As this included the ascent of the escarpment, and as it rained diligently for the greater part of the day, the progress was slow.

A tramp of forty minutes brought the caravan to the foot of the Kikuyu escarpment, where the ascent of 2000 feet commenced. The escarpment at this point on the trail is a rough precipitous height which arises as abruptly from the plain as a tower. It looked singularly formidable, presenting an almost vertical front of harsh, grey rock and grey grass, tempered here and there by a few adventurous bushes. A zigzag path of the roughest made its way for some 500 feet up the face of this forbidding wall. The porters, as they crawled upwards with their multi-coloured loads, crossing to and

fro on the surface of the rock like figures in some theatrical scene, presented a remarkable spectacle. The escarpment is in steps, and this steep part represented the lowest step. Higher up the ascent is much easier, for the path moves obliquely across the front of the mountain leaving one abrupt embankment or step to be negotiated at the end. The ascent occupied two hours and twenty minutes. A Masai would have done it in less than half the time.

The summit of the plateau is level, standing at a height of about 8000 feet—the elevation of the Furca Pass. From the edge of this plateau the grandest view of the Rift Valley is to be obtained. It is here that its immensity can be appreciated as well as the fact that it is a terrific rift or crack in the fabric of the earth. At the brink of the precipice stand rocks, trees, and bushes with familiar and clearly cut outlines. Beyond these is a void full of mist, a sudden chasm, an unsubstantial world lit by a light as white as that of the moon. On the floor of this pale valley the Kidong River could be traced for miles as a thread of green. Longonot seemed trivial, while it was possible to look down into the crater of Suswa. Although it was raining where we stood, there was a patch of sunlight on the Mau escarpment forty miles away.

The plateau of Kikuyu was without question the most beautiful country that we came upon during the whole of the present journey. It was as perfect a realisation of English park land as the mind could imagine, a land as green as Devonshire in June, a country of rolling downs and level meads, of scattered woods and the most

enchanting glades. The ground was covered everywhere with flowers, with tiny orchids, with flowers such as are met with on Alpine heights, with blossoms so varied in tint that the land might have been a valley in Kashmir. The climate was ideal and exhilarating to a degree. There was a keen rain and a searching wind, it is true; we had fallen behind in the rear of the column; we were wet through and had lost our way, but none of these things mattered, for the magic air of the plateau had taken ten years from the age of each one of us. It would be proper to add that among the miscellaneous folk lost with us at this juncture was a porter carrying a food box which contained not only food but drink.

Lamoru and the camp were reached by a trail in the Kikuyu forest to which we were guided by a lean goat-herd who regarded us all the way with unconcealed interest and suspicion. It had rained nearly all day, it rained persistently all the next night, the ground was like a sponge, every path was slippery with mud, wet clothes could no longer be dried, and we were assured that the rainy season had set in. There was a railway station at Lamoru, so the safari was very reluctantly abandoned, and we made our way to Nairobi by train.

CHAPTER XIX

NAKURU AND THE ROAD WESTWARD

RETURNING to Naivasha the railway journey westwards is continued to the Victoria Nyanza. The country beyond the little settlement soon becomes very rough and irregular, being covered by a straggling bush which furnishes an excellent shelter for game. Between Naivasha and Nakuru a greater variety of wild animals will be passed than at any other section of the line, while in numbers they may exceed the herds in the Athi country. After the rugged district about Gilgil is left behind the great plains at Elmenteita are entered, and these extend to Nakuru and beyond. On these level grass lands are to be seen zebra, hartebeest, and gazelles in thousands, while in the bush we saw many wild hogs, numerous great baboons, some buck, ostriches, bustard, and that most beautiful bird, the Kavirondo crane.

Nakuru looks across the prairie and across the Nakuru lake, while behind it rises a round hill which is evidently a volcano in a state of harmless senility. Distant hills border the plain upon which Nakuru stands. The place has an altitude of nearly 6000 feet. From its perfect climate, its healthiness, and the magnificent

scenery with which it is surrounded, Nakuru will no doubt become the Simla of British East Africa. When it is provided with a better water supply it may claim to possess the qualifications of a health resort of exceptional value. It is a pretty place because it is so well planted with trees, but it can at present boast to be little more than an ambitious hamlet. The medical officer of the province is resident at Nakuru. There are excellent stores in the settlement, and, above all, a charming hotel, kept by a Frenchman and his wife, which is the pride of the district. Nakuru, moreover, is a great centre for sportsmen, being the nearest station to Lake Baringo, where, according to the 'Directory of East Africa,' 'the best shooting in the country is to be got.'

The lake lies three miles from the town. Except on the side facing Nakuru, it is surrounded by low hills which come down to the water's edge. Between the foot of the hills and the margin of the lake is a belt of trees and then a white beach. A dead calm had settled upon this solitary pool. Its surface was like oil and as smooth as a plate of polished metal. The shadows of the clouds lay upon it as if they had actual substance. They marred its lustre as warm breath dulls a mirror. The hills around varied in tint from indigo to a generous blue. It has been said of Sir Harry Johnston's pictures of African scenery that they err in being too extreme in colour. Nakuru lake, when becalmed in the sun of a tropical afternoon, presents an intensity of colour that no artist could exaggerate. As to the tint of the lake itself, it varies with its mood. When it is wholly in

LAKE NAKURU.

THE MARKET PLACE, PORT FLORENCE.

[*See* page 146.

shadow the mere is a Dead Sea, ashen and sombre. When the light brightens the surface of the water breaks out into a symphony of blue, displaying every change and variation from the grey of silver to the blue of the far mist, the blue of the forget-me-not, the purple of the pansy. It is a wonderful thing to look upon, as wonderful as if human eyes could change as we watched them from grey to blue, from blue to the darkness of a shadow. Behind the water and the hills are the white wool-pack clouds of the equator.

Nakuru is an alkaline or soda lake, the water of which, when observed closely, is a yellowish brown. The immediate shores are barren, being made up of flat rocks, ash-coloured sand, and dead tree trunks which have been bleached by the alkaline spray. In spite of the fact that it is worse than brackish, the lake is swarming with birds, with ducks, geese, and flamingoes. A flock of some 200 flamingoes rose from the beach as we came out of the mimosa grove which encircles it. They rose together and, wheeling before us in a long narrow ribbon or streamer of pink, white, and black, swept across the lake as if they were carried by a sudden wind. There were two hippopotami in the water and the spoor of many more on the sand. It speaks well for the toughness of the skin of this animal that it can wallow with delight in a solution so caustic as to be used for stripping paint off doors.

The plains were almost as interesting as the lake, since herds of wild animals haunted the very suburbs of the little town. By a cautious approach, a good deal of patience, and the help of a field-glass. it was possible

to watch them from a comparatively slight distance. At one spot on the plain, near an isolated patch of scrub, there was evidently some commotion, some incident that had disturbed the calm of the prairie. The animals nearest at hand appeared to regard the place with some anxiety, vultures and other birds were hanging about, while a hyæna, unable to drag himself away from the spot, skulked round the bushes like a pickpocket round a crowd. It was later on revealed that there had been a tragedy here—a zebra had been killed by a lion, and of the victim little remained but the head, the hoofs, some skin, and the large bones. Although all interest in the episode was over, animals loitered about in the vicinity just as people will loiter by a house where a murder has been committed, even when the essential evidences of the crime have been removed.

This hyæna was an object of the greatest interest. The animal, as is well known, is mainly nocturnal in its habits, and is, therefore, seldom to be seen in the day-time. This wretched creature appears to hold the position of the vilest beast of the field. The animal is repulsive to look at, its bristly fur is blotched with a kind of plague spot, while its skin gives forth, as Falstaff would say, 'the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril.' It has the deformity of a hunchback and the walk of a paralytic. Its cry is the most horrible sound produced by any living throat, being a madhouse laugh, terrible and yet grotesque, a hysterical yell that ends in a delirious whoop. The hyæna, too, can affect a grin that is simply devilish. It is an abject coward, frightened at its own shadow, a miserable neurotic in a state of

constant suspicion and, incidentally, a thief and a parasite. It has not the courage to do its own killing, but lives on the leavings of its betters. It rejoices in offal. It will eat what the vultures will leave, and finds its daintiest meal in a putrid human corpse. It is an outcast, a pariah, mean and cringing, the Uriah Heep among animals.

No legend about animals—so far as I know—pretends to tell what the hyæna has done to deserve this utter degradation, or why it has been endowed with every despicable quality. It is a matter of wonder if the animal ever enjoys itself, if it is ever young and romps about, if it ever is free from terror and at peace. The specimen of the hyæna crocuta that we watched near Nakuru seemed exceedingly perturbed, as if it had a world of crime on its mind. The moment it realised that it was watched it crept away like a suspected house-breaker, with a slinking gait, as if expecting the slash of a whip across its loins every moment.

The Masai and other tribes have a casual way of disposing of their dead. The corpse is carried some little way from the settlement and, without any ceremony of farewell, is laid on the ground for the hyænas to eat. The Masai have this respect for their dead that they do not kill these disgusting ghouls. They recognise a kind of revolting relationship between the tribe and the outcasts. On a part of the plain remote from the trail we came upon the skull and some of the larger bones of a Masai who had been disposed of in this hideous fashion. There is this in the usage, that it would seem more in keeping with the wild spirit of the race that

the bones of the hunter, purified by the rain and whitened by the sun, should lie among the grass on the open plain than that they should crumble away imprisoned in a dark grave.

The doctor's garden at Nakuru would surprise those who hold certain theoretical views of horticulture in the tropics. It had as trim a lawn as many in England, as well as a display of English flowers—roses, balsams, phloxes, and carnations—that would compare only too brilliantly with the appearance of an English garden in the depth of December. More curious still, a charming little girl, the picture of health, was running about on the grass, with bare feet, and without even a hat to cover her fair hair. All keepers of gardens are given to grumbling, but the only complaint that the brown-skinned gardener—whose wages were 1*s.* 4*d.* per week—had to make was that the zebras often played havoc with the hedge.

Once during our stay at Nakuru, at the hour of 3 A.M., the roar of lions was heard in the precincts of the hotel. It was consoling to be told at breakfast that these disturbers of the peace were not specially in search of hotel guests as prey, but that they had followed a herd of cattle which had been driven into the town from up-country the night before.

The distance by rail from Nakuru to the Lake Victoria Nyanza is 135 miles. The time occupied on the journey is eleven-and-a-half hours, therefore the pace, including stoppages, may be reckoned as about twelve miles an hour. The train has to climb to the summit of the Mau plateau. The ascent commences as soon as Nakuru is left. Through

the kindness of Mr. Currie, the manager of the railway, we had the advantage of traversing this section of the line on the cowcatcher. Upon the inverted prow of the engine so named a garden bench is fixed which will seat three. The view of the country obtained from this position is unequalled, while the dust of the road is escaped.

The train when on the summit of the Mau—between the stations of Molo and Landiani—has reached the height of 8350 feet and a distance from the sea of 489 miles. This summit is very impressive. It consists of immense undulating downs covered only by wind-swept grass of the colour of a lion's skin. There is not a tree nor a bush in sight nor a sign of life. The traveller, being on the belt of the earth, is probably nearer to heaven than he has ever been in his life. This once impenetrable solitude of grass and sky is still shut off from the rest of the world by a great forest which surrounds it on every side. The trees, when the summit is in sight, cease their advance as if afraid to encroach upon a holy ground and, standing reverentially in a circle afar off, seem to be guarding the magic space. If Druids had ever occupied this part of the earth they would have erected a Stonehenge on this solemn hill top.

The forest through which the line passes in its ascent to the summit on the one side, and in its descent on the other, covers an immense area. It begins on the Nakuru flank about Elburgon and continues thence as a dense tangled wood of remarkable fascination. At Molo it is for a moment broken in upon by a picturesque sweep of grass land which is very reminiscent of England.

The climate, too, has about it all the briskness and keenness of England, for Molo is 7940 feet above the sea level.

On the lake side of the summit the forest spreads on to Lumbwa, where a wonderful country of low hills suddenly opens out. The view thus revealed is, by its enormous extent and its infinite variety, one of the most amazing of the whole journey. The earth seems to have been tossed about like the water in the rapids below a cataract, and so to have formed itself into solid waves, eddies, and whirlpools. It is a grass-covered land almost bare of trees, save for the curious flat-topped acacia which is ever present. Hills follow one another, range after range, like the combers on a beach. They roll away to the very horizon, where they break against the sky in a thousand peaks and knolls. The railway roams over this tumbled country in careless, circuitous fashion, as if it were running wild and delighted in its freedom, stepping from hillock to hillock by means of a trestle bridge or a serpentine spider-legged viaduct, and then diving into the hollow of a crest of rock through the only tunnel that the line can boast of. Beyond Lumbwa is Fort Ternan, where was an important military base during the suppression of the Soudanese rebellion in Uganda in 1897.

The descent from the Mau summit to the lake shore is remarkable in this, that it affords in a few hours a rough display of the flora of the world such as would involve (on the level) a journey from Scotland to Khartoum. On the mountain top are trees of a kind that flourish in the woods of northern Europe—pine-like

trees, as well as heather and sweet-scented clover. 'As the railway descends,' writes Sir Harry Johnston, 'the traveller will quit the forests of junipers and yews and enter that belt of umbrella-topped acacias so characteristic of African mountains. Below these he will skirt grassy downs, and will notice in the ravines and stream valleys the emerald-green ornamental foliage of the wild banana and the graceful fronds of the wild date palm. Then, at a lower descent still, comes downright tropical vegetation where the ground is suitable.'

Near a place called Muhoroni, thirty-four miles from the lake, the hills end. A plain is then entered which extends with little variation to the terminus of the railway at Port Florence. This plain belongs to a miserable country covered with sun-dried grass and innumerable scattered thorn trees. The trees are stunted and skeleton-like; they appear half starved, for their few leaves are a sickly greenish grey. They have an aspect of great viciousness, being covered with repellent spikes. To the right rises the escarpment of the Nandi plateau, a long towering bank, brown for lack of rain, which appears to be the wall which encloses this Orchard of Thorns. It is to be noticed, too, on entering this weary place that the climate has changed. It has lost all its keenness and vivacity and has become humid, feverish, and languidly warm.

On passing through the Orchard of Thorns there is much to be noticed that is interesting. It is now not game, but natives. We are among the Kavirondo people. Their villages and hamlets can be seen in many a clearing—compact little clumps of round huts,

with conical roofs of thatch, surrounded by a dense boma or hedge.

The Kavirondo are an exceptionally fine race of Bantu negroes, undoubtedly black, with the woolly hair, the flattish nose, and the prominent lips of the original stock; but with these features so subdued that the swarthy face is always comely and not infrequently handsome. They entirely lack the brute-like coarseness which marks the pure negro as he appears on the West Coast and in the Indies. These people have certain peculiarities, not the least marked of which is their dislike for clothes. The men, the unmarried women, and the children are all stark naked. The married women wear a little pendant from their waists which is called a tail. Bead necklaces, ornaments of hippopotamus teeth, earrings, wire bracelets and anklets rather accentuate than atone for the absence of clothing.

There was a great stir in the thorn brake on the occasion of our nearing the lake, for the Kavirondo were out hunting. We passed over twenty excited parties, each numbering from five to fifteen men. They were naked, were armed with spears and knives, and were accompanied by dogs of a nondescript breed. Some of the men had a skin—often a leopard's skin—hanging from one shoulder which gave to the company a picturesque effect.

It is impossible to conceive a spectacle more appropriate to the approach of the great lake than the one these woods provided. We had reached the interior of Africa, a country which—so far as the civilised world is concerned—had been almost until now an unknown

land. We were by the shores of that mysterious lake which had been for centuries a mere chimera, and which was first seen by the eyes of a white man only fifty-two years ago. We were nearing the source of the Nile, the sacred river, whose head waters had from the dawn of history formed the goal of endless quests. Here, on all sides, was a wild wood peopled by naked savages hunting with dogs and spears, just as they had done 2000 years ago. The wood was old, but these wild men were older. The wood had changed during a score of centuries, but they had altered not a whit. This was the veritable world as it had been before History began. The black hunters, some running, some creeping, some bounding through the thicket in leaps, were in perfect harmony with the olive-green trees and the long biscuit-coloured grass. As we passed a village the women in the clearing around it would look up from their work with fawn-like eyes, and it seemed not unfitting that they should be as naked as the day they were born, should be unashamed, and should be tilling the soil with a prehistoric implement only to be found in Europe in museums.

On the platform at the last station, Kibos, were two or three men who had come in from the country to look at a train. With the exception of a necklace of stones, some bangles and bracelets, they were absolutely nude. They viewed the product of the twentieth century with the same keenness that we viewed the people of the first. These very men, as boys, might have gazed with awe upon Speke, the first white man who had ever found his way to the hidden lake.

CHAPTER XX

PORT FLORENCE

THE first glimpse of the lake is wofully disappointing, being as free from any suggestion of grandeur or romance as the first view of a mud flat on the lower Thames. At the end of a shabby plain is a pond of dirty water. That is all. It is not even a large pond, while as for any hint of an inland sea there is none. The fact is that Port Florence—where the railway ends—is situated on a shallow backwater known as Kavirondo Bay. It has all the stagnant aloofness of a backwater, being only open to the lake through two narrow channels which may be easily overlooked, and were indeed passed unnoticed when the first circumnavigation of the Victoria Nyanza was made. To judge of the lake from the semi-detached bay would be to judge of London from Wormwood Scrubbs. The traveller, therefore, who expects that there will burst upon his gaze a lake as mystic and wonderful as that from whose depths rose the sword Excalibur, must be prepared for a commonplace substitute. He must be content to enter the enchanted palace through the back yard.

The only thing pretty about Port Florence is its

PORT FLORENCE.

PORT FLORENCE: FROM THE GOLF LINKS.

name. That is its sole aesthetic possession. I cannot recall a single agreeable quality that may be ascribed to the place except the kindly hospitality of the English officials who reside there and the comfort of their little club. There are tennis courts in this port as well as golf links. The links are a mere *simulacrum*, a pathetic make-believe. A St. Andrews caddie would not condescend to ' carry ' on such a ground as this. He would ask in vain for the putting-green, and would be disposed to regard the whole course as an indifferently levelled bunker. Many, however, find joy in this playing-field, the joy of remembering better things, such as the firm green turf, the gorse bushes in blossom, the cold keen wind, the glimpse of the English Channel.

Port Florence is a haphazard collection of corrugated iron huts, designed on the lines of a water tank, together with certain bungalows of the same material which make a struggle to be cheerful. The whole is laid out on a scorching slope that, but for a few trees, is as bare as a boulder. The place is hot—unpleasantly hot—for the sun appears to strike it with a degree of malice. It would seem as if some Titan of a toymaker had put together a number of little houses and had placed them on this furnace-hot bank to dry, the cheaper ones on the left hand and the more expensive on the right. There are a few streets marked out, but it may be gathered that their purpose is not understood, for they are avoided with marked determination. A stone building to accommodate some of the officials is in process of erection, but it is as incongruous in the matter of its surroundings as if it had been built in the Sahara. Some of the gardens

in Port Florence are pitiful to see, because so much has been aimed at and so little done. Each is in its heyday the garden of a forlorn hope, and in its end the garden of despair. They are cherished, I have no doubt, but it is with the same fond delusion that inspires a child to lavish affection upon a doll made out of a stuffed stocking and a piece of rag.

The interests of Port Florence concentrate in its market-place. This place is represented by an uncouth square in an untidy waste. The sides of the square are composed of corrugated iron sheds with red roofs and green walls. In the centre of the square is a covered-in market house as simple in construction as a cow shelter. The place is crowded mostly with Kavirondo natives who, while not so naked as in their own villages, are naked enough. With them are natives of other tribes in gaudy blankets, a few Baganda in long white robes and white caps, Swahili porters dressed *à la caravane*, an *askari* in a brown uniform and a scarlet tarboosh, together with numerous Hindoo traders who have a lively eye for colour in dress.

The unclothed Kavirondo form the *corpus* or body of the crowd, a crowd so conspicuous in bare chests, bare backs and bare limbs that one becomes nauseated with the human form and its details. The fact that man is the most naked of all mammals is forced upon the attention. An East-end crowd is unpleasant, but this is an East-end crowd in a state of nudity. There is an odour of humanity in the air which makes it easy to understand how a dog can track a man for miles. With all this bare flesh displayed before the eye one is

THE MARKET PLACE, PORT FLORENCE.

THE MEAT MARKET, PORT FLORENCE.

constrained to modify Shakespeare's well-known line and exclaim, 'Oh monstrous! but one halfpennyworth of cloth to this intolerable deal of skin!'

The sheds that form the square are occupied as shops by the Hindoo traders, being bright with brass and brilliant with splashes of colour. Most of the business, however, is transacted on the bare earth, where squat, more or less unclad, the vendors of beads and cloth, of fruit and fish, of metal rings and mealies. Here too is the money-changer whose table cannot be overturned, for the counter is the ground. This financier is a woman naked to the waist and very rich in anatomical detail. Probably in no other money market in the world will a broker be found less ostentatious in dress than this woman, for a couple of bank-notes and a tape would have provided her with a more decent costume than the one she wore.

At some little distance from the seat of commerce is the meat market. Both the customers and the vendors of this commodity are comparatively well dressed, since meat of the excellence displayed is only for the wealthy. The market consists of an ancient tree from one bough of which hang immense lumps of ragged meat made oily by the sun. The masses of flesh are suspended from the tree by coarse ropes. They have the colour of beet-root, except in places where the flies make the surface black. The pieces do not appear as joints, nor do they seem to have been cut up with a knife. Their shapeless and frayed aspect suggests that the animal was separated into parts, not by saw and chopper, but by an internal explosion. The market conveys the idea that these

gory exhibits are not things pleasant to the palate, but rather are fragments of malefactors who have been beheaded, drawn, and quartered by inexperienced officials.

The quay at Port Florence is the scene of considerable bustle on the days when the train comes in. On one side of the quay is the dock, said to be the highest placed dock in the world. On the other side is the boat in which the voyage round the lake is to be made. This is the SS. *Winifred*, a screw steamer of 500 tons, with a draught of seven feet and an average speed of about nine knots. She has the appearance of a first-class yacht, being at the same time as trim as a man-of-war. The vessel is not only well found, but is as comfortable in every particular as a boat can be. When it is remembered that everything connected with this steamer, with the exception of the wood fuel used in the furnaces, has to be brought from England, it is to the credit of the railway company that in so remote a water they have been able to place a steamer service as good as that found on any of the lakes of Europe.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LAKE VICTORIA NYANZA

THE Lake Victoria Nyanza is crossed by the equator at its northern extremity, Port Florence lying just south of the line. The height of the lake above the level of the sea is over 3600 feet. Its area is about 27,000 square miles, this being a little less than the area of Scotland. Its greatest length is some 270 miles and its greatest breadth 225 miles. Its deepest sounding reaches to 270 feet. The extreme range in the level of the water is only 43½ inches, the lake being at its lowest in November and at its highest in July. It was discovered by Speke on July 30, 1858. The first European to reach the lake through Masai land—that is, by the route now followed by the railway—was J. Thomson. This was in 1883.

Of all the mysteries which the earth has kept from the inquisitiveness of man none has been so impenetrable, so engrossing, or so persistently attacked as the mystery which for centuries shrouded the interior of Africa. To the multitude this region was a fearsome desert fitly represented in its vastness and its desolation by the blank area that marked it on the map. From under

the shadow that engulfed this domain in utter darkness there emerged the great and marvellous river, the Nile. For over 1700 years this unknown land fired the imagination and tantalised the curiosity of the civilised world. It became the subject of more fables, more fancies, and more speculation than any other spot on the surface of the globe. It was to some a sandy waste, to others an impenetrable forest, to a few a country of limitless plains and steppes. The coast of the continent, from the Mediterranean to the Cape, became as familiar to mariners as the bays and headlands of Europe. The great rivers were followed inland for many a mile. The country to the north was opened up, the land to the south was peopled by pioneers, while hardy settlements were formed along both the eastern and the western shores of the continent. Year after year adventurers essayed to penetrate the belt that encircled the unknown country. Those who came back could tell nothing of the land, while it may be that the mysteries of the kingdom had been revealed to the dying eyes of those who never returned.

In spite of years of endeavour the interior of Africa remained an utter void. Yet it would appear that some one, in days forgotten, must have forced a way into the strange country, must have learned its secrets, and lived to bring to the outer world a tale of what he had seen; for about the year A.D. 170 a certain Greek Egyptian of Alexandria named Ptolemy wrote concerning Equatorial Africa. He described it as a land in which there were two great lakes (now known as the Victoria and the Albert Nyanza) and said that from the larger

of these came the main waters of the Nile. Near to the lakes he declared were certain heights which he called the Mountains of the Moon. These mountains are now familiar as the Ruwenzori Range. Ptolemy made a map in which these facts were set out. Considering the age at which it was produced, his chart is remarkably accurate, and still more curious is it that for 1700 years it provided the only accurate delineation of what the world still regarded as an unexplored district.

Ptolemy's map was to most men during this period a thing to mock at. The modern geographer appraised it as a ludicrous example of the vagaries of the early writer. To the description vouchsafed was attached no more scientific value than was bestowed upon the geography of the New Atlantis. While men continued to busy themselves with complex surmises as to the features of the *terra incognita*, there could still be heard from time to time, amidst the clamour of scientific dispute, a voice that babbled of two great lakes and the Mountains of the Moon with the persistency of the refrain of an ancient song. Explorers from the coast returned with tales heard from natives of great lakes in the fastnesses of the country. There were still stranger stories of mountains covered with 'something white,' and so Ptolemy's map came to be studied again. In 1848 and 1849 Kilima Njaro and Kenia were discovered. They were described as being covered with perpetual snow. This news was received with scoffing. People who could believe that a live toad might be found in the heart of a crystalline rock declined to believe that abiding snow could ever be found under the equator.

At the commencement of the year 1858 the state of knowledge was as follows: It was known that the Blue Nile came from Lake Tsana in Abyssinia; the White Nile had been ascended to a point a little above Gondokoro, while the western tributary of the river, the Bahr-el-Ghazal, had been defined. The rest of the story is familiar. Speke discovered the great lake in 1858, and in 1862 came upon the Ripon Falls and the actual starting-point of the Nile. The Lake Albert Nyanza was discovered by Baker in 1864, while in 1889 Stanley made known to the world the Semliki River, the Lake Albert Edward Nyanza, and the mountain range of Ruwenzori.

We started at noon on a certain Sunday in November to make the tour of the lake. The voyage occupied eleven days. Keeping first along the east coast, the steamer sailed south to Muanza; she then followed the opposite shore of the lake to its northern extremity at Jinja by the Ripon Falls; from Jinja the return was made to Port Florence. In the course of this cruise we crossed the equator twice. Captain Bruce, who was in command of the *Winifred*, made the voyage an exceedingly pleasant one, for not only was he a fine navigator and a charming companion, but his intimate knowledge of every point on the coast gave to the cruise a particular interest.

The climate on the lake is a little trying, being warm and enervating. Although the thermometer at noon varied between 70° and 82° F., the moisture in the air made even this moderate heat oppressive. Moreover, when the steamer was moored by the shore,

HOMA POINT, KAVIRONDO BAY.

KARUNGU: LAKE VICTORIA NYANZA.

[*See* page 170.

the mosquitoes were troublesome in spite of mosquito curtains and the most elaborate measures carried out to rid the vessel of these pests. The mosquito takes very kindly to a ship and seems loth to leave it, while even wholesale slaughter by means of a wet towel wielded in the watches of the night appears to have little effect upon the ranks of these piratical flies.

The first day was spent in getting out of Kavirondo Bay. This bay—as has already been noted—is disappointing. Its Thames-coloured water and its bare and monotonous shore, from which every object of interest has apparently been removed, are not inspiring. It is indeed a sorry realisation of the Lake of Great Expectations. It is hardly to be believed that this was the sheet of water that figured for so many hundreds of years on Ptolemy's daring map. Can this be the place that men for centuries struggled to reach and died in the attempt? Can this pool belong to the land dominated by the Mountains of the Moon, or was a piece of water dull as this ever worth discovering? As for mystery and romance, this bay is as free of it as the reservoir of a water company. The shores, it is true, are fringed with papyrus and haunted by many hippopotami, but these are scanty items in the fabric of a dream. It is true also that the sacred ibis finds a home in Kavirondo Bay, but it would need untold legions of these birds to convert a rank marsh into a thing of interest.

Near the mouth of the bay is a fine headland, Homa Point, surmounted by a rough hill, 1700 feet high. Owing to want of rain the land had the tint of a dead leaf, the hill was nut brown in colour where it was covered

with grass and a rifle green where it was covered by trees. Two channels lead into Kavirondo Bay—the Kisingere channel and the Rusinga. It was by the former that we passed out of the muddy creek into the open lake. This channel (which lies between Rusinga Island and the mainland) is so narrow and so hidden from view that for a while the boat appeared to be steering blindly into a land-locked cove. The narrowest part of the waterway—known as Mbita passage—shows only 11 feet of water at its shallowest part, and can therefore only be attempted in smooth weather.

The moment this narrow water-gate is passed the vessel glides into the open lake. It is an impressive moment as well as a remarkable spectacle. The ship has passed into a sea. Ahead there are two low islands, the only specks of land in sight, for beyond them the bright water stretches away to the horizon. On the left is a long coast line made up of countless hills mostly conical in shape, which follow one another as far as the eye can reach, to end in mere grey ripples of land. Here at last is the Great Lake, the great Victoria Nyanza, the lake of Ptolemy's map!

CHAPTER XXII

RUSINGA ISLAND

As the lake is unlit at night, it is only possible to sail so long as the daylight lasts, and therefore, at or about sundown, the anchor is dropped in some sheltered spot until the dawn. In the afternoon of the first day out from Port Florence we anchored off Rusinga Island for the night. This is a small island with a hill in the centre of it. It contains an insignificant native settlement which is very seldom visited by Europeans, as there is no trade with the village and no object in landing except to satisfy some degree of curiosity. We rowed ashore as soon as the ship was made fast. On approaching the island the only evidences of life were afforded by numerous birds and by two hippopotami in the lake.

The hippopotamus, we noticed, bathes with great decency, the only parts of its rubber-like mass that are visible above the water being the nostrils, eyes, and ears with an occasional modest part of the back. The animal's position is indicated from time to time by a jet of spray when he takes upon himself to 'blow.' The river-horse has the small alert ears of a fox-terrier, combined with a flat ponderous face, shaped like a

giant's boot, on which is expressed whatever is bland, lazy, gluttonous and smug. He is built on liberal lines, for he has the widest mouth in the universe, weighs about four tons, and has a stomach with the uneconomical capacity of six bushels.

The hippopotamus at one time made a home in England, wading as far north in his travels as the county of Norfolk at one stage and the county of York at another. This was in the Pliocene and Pleistocene Ages. Since the close of the latter period a considerable time elapsed before the animal came to England again. The visitor who set foot on this island after an absence of so many thousands of years landed from a P. & O. steamer at Southampton on May 25, 1850, and proceeded by train to London, where he remained until his decease in 1878.

Pliny ascribed to the hippopotamus a certain amount of surgical knowledge, together with some skill and daring as an operator. He stated that when the animal felt that it was getting too stout it bled itself by pressing a vein of its leg against some sharp object, and then plastered up the wound with mud so that it might speedily heal. Although the dressing adopted by the hippopotamus is not in accord with modern aseptic teaching, the operation itself—considering the thickness of skin to be traversed—must have been exceedingly bold and heroic. The fact that surgical writers have never acknowledged that the art of phlebotomy was learnt from the hippopotamus will no doubt be ascribed by laymen to professional jealousy.

There was no definite landing place on the island, but we made the shore at a spot where a heap of unwieldy

fishing nets, fashioned of grass or banana-leaf fibre, had been drawn up. The island was green, but the vegetation was entirely strange, there being no plant that was familiar or that had a reasonable likeness to the shrubs and flowers of Europe. The place might have been the experimental ground of a Botanical Garden. After a walk of about half a mile we came to the village. Our arrival created some excitement and confusion, while all the small children screamed with alarm.

This Kavirondo village differed in no essential from other settlements we visited about this part of the lake. It was surrounded by a lofty hedge or boma of cactus, euphorbia, and thorn. The entrance was through a low gateway. Inside were a number of small huts with mud and wattle walls and conical roofs of thatch. These houses, a few of which are possessed of a verandah, are well built and comfortable to look at. In some instances —as in a village at Karungu—the portals of the huts were made of mud ornamented with the same designs as are found on neolithic vases dug up from the round barrows of Europe.

The interior of the huts displayed a degree of tidiness and cleanliness of which the slum-dweller in London or Paris has little knowledge. If the condition of a man's abode can be taken as a criterion of his social development, then the denizen of the slums is the savage and the Rusinga Islander the product of civilisation. In the centre of the village is a compound in which are gathered the cows and goats of the community. This cattle-pen also would put to utter shame the slough of filth which

marks the centre of many an English farmyard. In addition to the residences are numerous small store-houses for fodder and grain, &c., which help to make the circular village street very picturesque.

A curious pole like a bending flagstaff is found in certain of these villages (see fig. p. 168). It is used in connection with the catching of quails. From the pole are hung little cages of plaited grass containing tame birds. These act as decoys to wild quails, who are caught in snares laid out below the cages. Here and there in the village street will be a grinding-stone for rubbing grain into flour, a large earthenware vessel for holding maize, together with archaic water-pots, cooking-pots, and miscellaneous utensils which would appear to be common property. On the ground at Rusinga was lying an axe, a simple implement of wood with an iron blade. Its chief interest consisted in the fact that it was exactly identical with the 'celt' of the Bronze Age.[1] This implement demonstrates that if these people took their proper place in the chronology of human progress, it would be necessary to go back some thousands of years. Here is a 'celt' in daily use, while just off the island is a modern steamship lit with electric light.

Outside many of the huts are quaint four-legged stools upon which the villagers sit in moments of leisure (see fig. p. 170). In some corner of the hamlet is sure to be seen the chess board which has to represent the indoor amusements of the place, the social club, the 'bridge' party and the common billiard-table. It consists of a heavy log of wood, upon the smoothed surface of

[1] *Prehistoric Times*, by Lord Avebury, London, 1900, p. 28.

which some sixteen hollows have been scooped. Upon this board, a specimen of which is shown at p. 170, the absorbing game of 'bao' is played. Such is the childishness of pleasure-seeking folk that we may look forward to the time when the playing of 'bao' will be the rage in all the fashionable circles of Europe. The only weapons used by these people are bows, arrows, and spears.

The villagers of Rusinga comprised what the Americans would call 'a complete outfit.' Every generation was represented, from the grandfather or great-grandfather to the infant a week old, as well as every grade of relationship, parents and children, uncles and aunts, and cousins of no doubt endless degrees. The men, the younger women, and the children were all stark naked save for metal rings worn about the arms and legs and simple necklaces. Those who had taken to themselves clothing had assumed a negligible quantity. The Kavirondo are black, as has been already said, but they are people of splendid physique and pleasant countenance. Moreover, they are credited with being the most moral race of men and women in this region of Africa.

There were a couple of young dandies swaggering about the village who, in spite of their nakedness, were elaborately ornamented. It was evident that they represented the 'smart set' of the island, being very *chic* as well as exponents of the latest fashion. It is curious in these native communities that the men are the more modish, more devoted to matters of taste and style, and the greater slaves to dress; while the women are content with a monotony in attire which is as prosaic

as the costume of the European man when compared with that of the European women. The toilet of the Kavirondo beau is so elaborate as to engage a good deal of his leisure. Moreover he has a weakness for hats, for large hats trimmed with flowers and feathers, while the women go bald headed. It would seem that the primary conception of the matinée hat comes from the Lake Victoria Nyanza. That structure has certainly here reached its fullest development, for the latest models are no less than three feet high, so that Parisian modistes in search of new ideas and new creations should seek them from the young men of Kavirondo. I am unable to say whether the recent man by transferring his interest in dress to the recent woman can claim to have made progress or to have degenerated.

The Kavirondo possess certain rare blue beads. These may be worn as necklaces or bracelets, or may be attached to the outer edge of the pinna or external ear. In the last named instance holes, to the number of about fifteen, are pierced round the edge of the ear, and in these apertures are inserted brass fillets, like melon seeds in shape, by means of which the beads are held in place. These 'beads,' writes Sir Harry Johnston,[1] 'the knowing tourist should collect whilst they can be purchased, as they are of mysterious origin and great interest. They are not, as he might imagine at first sight, of European manufacture, but have apparently reached this part of the world from Nubia in some very ancient trading intercourse between Egypt and these

[1] *The Uganda Protectorate*, by Sir Harry Johnston, London, 1904, vol. i. pp. 36 and 209.

countries of the Upper Nile.' The natives know these beads to be of great antiquity, and hold the belief that they come from the far north-west. The interest in these ornaments therefore centres in the fact that they formed probably the earliest vehicles of commerce in the country, and that they represent the results of the first intercourse of the native of Central Africa with traders from the outposts of civilisation.

While in the Kavirondo district I searched persistently for these mementoes of ancient barter, but without result. Just as I was leaving the country, however, I came upon a man at Kibigori who had been attracted by the spectacle of white men in the exuberant clothing of their race. He himself was stark naked. A necklace ornamented his breast and some telegraph wire his arms and legs, but on his wrist he wore a bracelet made of a thong of hide on which were strung two mystic pieces of wood, a peculiar stone, and ten of those precious beads. I purchased this ornament for the sum of 8*d*. The man, although he was rendered still more naked by the transaction, viewed with some concern and no little delight my recklessness in the matter of money.

The beads are dull and opaque, but have a fine turquoise colour. They are very crudely manufactured. It would appear as if a thread of soft glass had been roughly turned into the form of a ring and then placed on its edge to harden, because on each bead is a flattened surface which must have been acquired while it was still in a plastic state. In some beads also it is possible to see where the two ends of the thread overlap, and have fused together to form the complete circle. (See cover.)

One episode at Rusinga served to illustrate the kindly nature of these people. We were received, after some misgivings, with effusion and unconcealed pleasure. The entire populace followed our steps, dancing round us with delight, just as children will follow a performing bear in the streets of a country town. It was impossible to advance in any direction without treading upon bare feet. Our hosts made no attempt to suppress their amusement at our ridiculous clothes and at the absurd colour of our skins. The village was for the moment emptied, for every living creature, including the dogs and the goats, were clustered about us at the gate. I noticed in the village street a solitary man sitting on a low stool and wearing on his head an absurd matinée hat. He was middle-aged and naked. From his listless attitude I imagined he was *blasé* so far as white people were concerned, and wished to show that he was bored by the sight of them.

As soon, however, as the first gush of curiosity had been satisfied, our audience turned with one accord to the languid citizen with the hat. It was then evident that he was blind, and that the first impulse of the community had been to run to the helpless man and tell him what they had seen. This they did in a bewildering chorus. The blind man was evidently a great favourite, for not content with describing the curious human freaks who had just entered the village, they led us forward so that he could feel our clothes, and especially our boots, as well as hold us by the hand. He made me stoop in order that he might ascertain with his fingers what I wore on my head. He was evidently gratified

to find that my sun helmet was not trimmed with feathers and flowers as was his own hat. He seemed pleased with the thought that, in at least one article of dress, he had the advantage. According to Sir Harry Johnston, the Kavirondo know how to work in iron, their smiths producing spears, axes, arrow-heads, and knives. They make also an unbeautiful pottery and are experts at basket work, as shown by their fish baskets and their hats. They are an agricultural people as well as expert fishermen.

As the women are in excess of the men, the people are inclined towards polygamy. 'It is highly improbable,' writes Sir Harry Johnston,[1] 'that any woman goes to her death unmarried; for if no suitor asks for her in the ordinary way, she will single out a man and offer herself to him at a "reduced price."' The Kavirondo wife takes upon herself strange responsibilities. It will be noticed that the married woman is apt to have her abdomen ornamented with curious scars arranged in a somewhat crude pattern. They are occasioned by making cuts in the skin and by rubbing into the wounds when fresh a powerful irritant. As a result of this measure formidable and massive weals are produced which together form a species of bas-relief on the owner's stomach.

Now this abdominal decoration is not the outcome of mere vanity. The scars are made with the generous and unselfish object of securing good fortune to the husband. Each piece of deformed skin has a value,

[1] *The Uganda Protectorate*, by Sir Harry Johnston, London, 1904, vol. i. p. 746.

so that the man before starting on a perilous journey or setting out to fight will probably make a few extra cuts on his wife's body in order to secure more certainly his personal safety. These cicatrices in fact represent a kind of insurance policy, each cut being an increased premium, or what in the language of provident companies would be called a bonus. The wife, therefore, of a man who is of a reckless disposition is likely to be richly ornamented with wounds. Should a native, for example, be induced to accept the position of chauffeur to a cheap motor, I can imagine that his wife's abdomen might be as thickly covered with cuts as a butcher's block. Why the insurance policy should be taken out, as it were, in the wife's name, I am unable to say.

From the point of view of medical practice it is interesting to note, on the authority of Sir Harry Johnston, that the Kavirondo 'are content with women doctors.' This expression rather suggests that the professional status of the lady doctor is not so high as it might be. Her methods of treatment certainly show a lack of resource and variety, for we were told that 'they attempt to cure most illnesses by putting pebbles in a gourd and rattling them over the head of the sick person until he is nearly deafened.' The procedure is evidently based upon the belief, held by many civilised women, that what most patients need is 'rousing.'

Should the pebble and gourd treatment fail, 'they cut off the head of a fowl or of a quail, and hang it to a string round the patient's neck to be worn until the cure is effected.' If I fell ill in a Kavirondo village, I should beg that the fowl-head regimen might—in spite

of its expense—be tried before the medical attendant brought the gourd to bear upon the case.

The Kavirondo bury their dead and pay certain tributes of respect to the shades of their ancestors. It would appear that it is the custom with some to make a little door at the back of their dwelling in order that the spirits of the dead may be able to come back to the house. This little door means much. It expresses a sentiment that is common to the entire human race —a sense of the utter homelessness of death. The dead body lies still in the house, but the spirit, with its thousand familiar traits, would seem to have passed through the open door into the blackness of the night and to wander away alone. Every mother who has lost a child, whether her home be in Rusinga or in London, has been thrown into despair by the unreasoning thought that there is no one to look after the spirit that has passed out into the drear solitude. Thus it is that the little door, the little gate of memories, at the back of the hut is never closed.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE EAST SHORE OF THE LAKE

IT would be well if the student of modern politics could visit Rusinga or other villages on the lake, for in these communities socialism in an ideal form has flourished for unknown centuries. He would find a people who have no rich and no poor, who know nothing either of class distinctions or of privileges, who have (apart from their personal effects) all things more or less in common, and who would appear to be working for the mutual good. In their midst he would come upon no reformer, since there are no oppressed to relieve and no wealthy to rob. He would miss the voice of the preacher, for the people have all settled down to one recognised and one irreducible level, having satisfied themselves that the first duty of man is to live in such a manner as will involve the least amount of labour.

Here, in fact, is socialism *in excelsis*. Here are a people who are free, happy, and contented. That they have made no progress during the last ten or twenty centuries is a matter of little moment, for socialism does not concern itself with the struggle that leads to progress.

The primary object of socialism is to maintain the level, the dead low-water level.

The man of enterprise in Rusinga, the man who advocated any advance either personal or communal, the man who introduced the fatal element of competition into this placid spot, would be suppressed as a disturber of the peace, or rather as a disturber of the level. For this reason among others the Kavirondo are still living in the Bronze Age, since socialism in its perfected form is nothing if not conservative.

The native of the lake will become in due course civilised, but it is a great leap from the Bronze Age to the twentieth century. It is a change so immense and so abrupt that it is no matter for wonder if in its immediate results there are anomalies and disasters. The village will be broken up; the man—as splendid a specimen of humanity as exists—will lose his cunning as a hunter and his skill with the bow and spear. He will find himself under the influence of a masterful power whose insigne is 'cheap labour.' He will be living not in a thatched hut with the little door at the back, but in a tin shed. As he mounts up into the light he will wear a bowler hat, elastic-side boots and a jersey, with possibly a pair of riding breeches or a mackintosh. Instead of hunting in the jungle or by the lake side, he will be digging drains. He will be told how good it is to work—to work for other people. He will be able not only to get drunk but to become unconscious, and this without difficulty. From the Hindoo trader he will learn dishonesty, lying, and the subtleties of money-lending. So far as he himself is concerned the process of regeneration

may be unhappy, but then his son or grandson may blossom into an evangelist.

On the morning after the visit to Rusinga the anchor was weighed at dawn. The sunrise behind the hills of Kisingere was marvellous in its effects and in the unwonted colours it produced in the skies. The course was south-westerly across the open lake. The water of the Victoria Nyanza as seen from the shore is blue, but as viewed from the steamer it is emphatically green, varying in depth of colour from bottle green to the tint of jade.

As we went southwards we noticed, far away on the surface of the sea, a loose brown cloud that precisely resembled the smoke of a steamer hull down. This column, however, was a cloud not of smoke but of flies. Lake flies in hosts of untold millions cross the water in this astonishing fashion. When a wind blows they are no doubt carried along by it, but when a dead calm has settled upon the lake they would appear to move by their own wings. On another occasion we saw on the horizon two of these clouds advancing together. They were actually 'pillars of cloud,' for they rose straight up from the lake. Should a steamer pass into this haze of wings it is as if it had plunged into a fog. The whole vessel, moreover, becomes thickly covered with the bodies of the insects, so that all hands have to be summoned to sweep down the decks and clear the bridge. Towards the end of the voyage we fell upon the fringe of one of these living clouds, whereupon the boat was at once smothered with flies. These insects are the Kungu fly, a gnat not unlike the English mayfly, but smaller. They appeared to be of very feeble physique, for the deposit

NATIVE HUTS AT KARUNGU.

VILLAGE AT KARUNGU.
Dwelling Houses on right, Store Houses on left.

on the deck was composed almost entirely of flies already dead. As the mere contact with a floating object could hardly prove fatal even to a fly, it is evident that borne along with the cloud there must be a vast host of the dead and the dying. Should a fly cloud be encountered by a steamer while she is moving in narrow waters, the vessel may have to give way and to slacken speed as she would do in a fog. That a steamer on the Victoria Nyanza could be stopped by a herd of hippopotami might be credited, but until a cloud of lake flies has been seen it is hard to believe that a vessel of 500 tons could be held up by a company of insects.

The Uganda railway can recount a very similar experience as to the strength of numbers. I inquired of one of the officials of the railway if a train had ever been stopped by wild animals. He said, No: giraffes, zebras, and other beasts had been knocked down, but without substantial damage to the engine or appreciable delay of the train. A conservative rhinoceros, with a senile dislike of anything new, had once charged a train, but with no more serious results than the tearing away of the footboard of a carriage. As regards the rhinoceros in this case, it appeared surprised that a thing composed, as it had imagined, of flesh and blood could be so hard. It went off with an additional grievance and an increased swelling of the head. Indeed, within my friend's recollection the only animal that had actually stopped a train and brought it to a standstill was a caterpillar. It so happened that at the foot of an incline some millions of green caterpillars were in the act of crossing the road as the train approached. Their crushed bodies rendered

the rails so slippery that the locomotive was unable to proceed. This ignominious defeat of a modern steam engine by a green caterpillar was so complete that a relief engine had to be despatched to draw the humiliated train up the slope.

Our next stopping place was Karungu, a Government station and would-be city of British East Africa. The English town is situated on a bare peninsula under the shelter of a savage mass of rocks. The little place consists of nine corrugated iron bungalows all told, together with a flagstaff. There has been an effort—worthy of Mark Tapley—to make the settlement cheerful, for the houses are painted in bright colours, in red and green and in white. They are all official residences, but they are every one empty and deserted.

The Government attempted to found a station here in the hope that Karungu would become a prominent port and a prosperous place of business. They built a little stone pier on the beach with, by the side of it, a custom house; and as 'trade follows the flag' they put up a flagstaff and provided a flag. But it was all of no avail. Death was already in possession of Karungu Bay and would brook no trespassers on this wan spit of land. The officials who had tried to make the spot smart and English-looking fell ill one after another. Their places were filled from home, but malaria soon left them empty again. So in the end the woful town of Karungu had to be abandoned. The flag of England had been carried thus far, but the strength of the standard bearer had failed.

This little outpost of Empire, this speck on the

VILLAGE AT KARUNGU.

VILLAGE AT KARUNGU.
Chess Board in foreground.

fringe of the British Dominions Beyond the Seas, is a most pathetic spot. It lies in the shadow of a rock in a weary land—a group of lonely houses clustering round the mast from which flew the banner of England. The lamentable path that leads from the houses to the landing place is nearly obliterated. It has known the firm steps of buoyant men eager to make the good name of Britain a power even in Karungu. It has known these same steps when, weak and shuffling, the officer has been helped down to the boat to be invalided home. The paint is falling off the corrugated iron walls and the white ant is busy with the woodwork. The gardens are desolate and choked with weeds, but there are still some flowers that struggle to lift their blossoms aloft, as if to keep alive the memory of the vanished hand that planted them. In a while the jungle will burst into the enclosure and will bury both the flowers and the pitiable houses under a pall of green.

It would appear that the sole representative of the Majesty of the British Government now at Karungu is an East Indian clerk who carries the dignity of his position with composure. We rowed ashore and landed on the minute stump of a pier. At the end of this structure was a flagstaff with a flag bearing the inscription 'H.M. Customs.' The banner seemed to be almost as incongruous as if it had been found hoisted on a barren rock in the middle of the lake. The most impressive personage on the landing stage was a solitary Kavirondo native who viewed us with considerable solemnity (see fig. p. 172). He was destitute of clothing, but wore a head-dress that resembled a breaking wave. On his arms and forearms was much

coiled wire in sections, giving rise to the impression that he was carrying samples of some metal hose pipe about with him on his upper limbs. He possessed a neck ornament like a child's bib, as well as a belt which supported nothing in the way of a garment. He wore elaborate garters of hair but no stockings, while his earrings might almost have been turned into croquet hoops. Although magnificent to look at he was not proud, for he consented to be photographed for the sum of 8*d*.

Although there are no white inhabitants at Karungu, there is a large native population who occupy certain prosperous villages a little way from the shore. The features of such settlements have been already described. The tidiness and cleanliness of these little fenced towns were very notable. The men and children were naked, according to the custom of the Kavirondo, but the women—influenced, no doubt, by the proximity of the nine tin houses and of H.M. Customs—had so far adopted European dress as to wear a kind of kilt or apron which reached to the middle of the thighs. In a few who were disposed to be overdressed (as many women are) the garment extended even to the knee. Above the waist they were as naked as the men.

In the lake immediately off Karungu Bay is one of the most curious islands likely to be seen anywhere, for it exactly resembles a low thatched house with a white door in the centre of its front wall.

Karungu is near to the boundary between British and German East Africa, so the steamer in its further passage southwards is soon in German waters. The coast of this part of the lake is low and uninteresting,

A NATIVE AT KARUNGU.

the shore being strewn for miles with immense smooth boulders which would seem to have been polished by centuries of rain. The boundary so far as the lake is concerned is indicated by a very low promontory of the same smooth rocks—a most modest self-effacing landmark—appropriate in this, that the country inland appears so featureless as to be hardly worth dividing.

The first port of call in German East Africa is Shirati. It is not an attractive spot, having little more to boast of in the matter of scenery than has Karungu. It is, however, a large and prosperous station with a considerable native population. At the end of the rough stone pier on which we landed the German flag was flying. A well-made road led uphill to the boma or fort, a square enclosure of brick with a parade ground in front of it. On the way up to the fort we came upon a party of prisoners chained together by their necks who were working by the roadside under supervision of a warder with a rifle. The spectacle did not add to the gaiety of the place. There are excellent official buildings in Shirati as well as smart bungalows and gardens. The Germans have done a great deal to make an agreeable town out of very unpromising materials. Certain streets have been already laid out and many trees planted.

The natives of Shirati are not the amiable Kavirondo folk. They appear to be a people of a superior if unattractive type, are quite copiously clothed, and are engaged busily in various industries, but the shade of melancholy which clings to the settlement seems to have left its mark on their serious faces.

The steamer having anchored off Shirati for the night proceeded at daybreak to the cluster of islands which form the northern boundary of Speke Gulf. Of these islands the largest is Ukerewe. It is fringed by low islets which are, for the most part, mere masses of tumbled stone tempered by a few bushes and half-starved trees. The steamer cast anchor at the northern end of Ukerewe near a promontory called Senga Point. A certain peculiarity is given to this part of the island by the enormous masses of smooth rock which stand piled up on the shore (see fig. p. 174). Their greyness impresses them with an appearance of wonderful antiquity. This region of the lake is remarkable for strangely shaped rocks. For instance, to the west of Ukerewe, off an island called Kunene, there are rocks rising out of the sea in a line which take the form of turreted castles, of obelisks, of towers, of isolated pillars, and of a kind of submerged Stonehenge.

It is interesting to note that the old Arab name for the lake—Lake Ukerewe—was derived from these islands. The name Nyanza is a Bantu root-word for any large extent of water and was the term adopted by Speke. When Speke took his first glimpse of the lake, it was this very island of Ukerewe which ' cut off any further view of its distant waters to the eastward of north.'

The landing place at Ukerewe is a sandy beach at the foot of the immense rocks. On any convenient ledge that raised itself above the water a crocodile or two could be seen basking in the sun. Several fishing eagles were busy along the coast, where swarmed also numerous white egrets.

PRISONERS WORKING IN CHAINS AT SHIRATI.

LANDING PLACE, UKEREWE.

The natives were a dull and melancholy people who fled at our approach. Their villages were poor, the huts being dome-shaped and thatched to the ground. Round the villages were extensive banana groves and many cattle. Wandering about these haunts of men were certain dreadful dogs of an undefined breed. They served to illustrate the belief that dogs take after their masters, for they were dejected and unhappy looking. They appeared also to be possessed of every parasite known to dogs, which misfortune may account for some of their melancholy and emaciation. The people use bows and arrows and spears as well as the neolithic implements which are found along this shore of the lake. There are a certain number of wild elephants on the island, the southern parts of which are densely wooded. These animals are happily preserved by the Germans from the tender mercies of the big-game hunter.

The inhabitants of Ukerewe are evidently expert fishermen and fine boatmen. Their canoes are small and fragile and of a curious pattern, being made of pieces of bark sewn together with fibre and innocent throughout of either bolt or nail. When they had recovered a little from their shyness, these mariners paddled off to the steamer to barter fowls and fish for pieces of cloth. This elementary and most ancient form of trading was carried on with such natives as were on board the vessel and was very interesting to watch.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DISCOVERY OF THE LAKE

FROM Ukerewe the passage of the steamer is across the wide stretch of water known as Speke Gulf to the southernmost part of the lake—to Muanza, the principal German town on this inland sea. Muanza is situated on the eastern shore of an estuary which runs inland for some sixty miles, or, as Speke would term it, for three days' journey. Muanza is one of the most picturesque spots on the Victoria Nyanza. The town is placed amidst beautiful scenery. It is one of the oldest European settlements in Central Africa and has this special interest, that it was from the cliff top at the mouth of the Muanza creek that Speke obtained his first view of the great water.

In the crossing of Speke Gulf the land is nearly lost sight of. When the southern coast comes into view, it is evident that a region is being approached which is totally unlike any part of the lake country that has as yet been seen. The low monotonous plains, the bare hills, the stretches of poor scrub, the miles of grey boulders are changed for a land of pleasant colour and of most gratifying variety. As the outlet of the creek

NATIVES WATCHING OUR DEPARTURE, UKEREWE.

VILLAGE AT UKEREWE.

is approached it is possible to define the position of Kagehyi, the spot from which Stanley started on March 8, 1875, for his voyage round the lake.

It may be well to recall here the circumstances under which the Lake Victoria Nyanza was discovered. Speke, the discoverer, was a native of Devon, the county that gave birth to Drake and Raleigh and many other adventurous spirits. He was an officer in the East India Service when, with Captain Burton, he started from Zanzibar to search for the source of the Nile. They left the coast on June 27, 1857, and struck boldly westwards. After seven months of wandering they discovered the great Lake Tanganyika. This was in January 1858.

It had been a fearsome journey. They had tramped through a desperate country, through swamps and jungles, through drenching rain and the most exhausting heat. Half-starved, weakened by fever, tortured by the bites of insects and crippled by blistered feet, they had struggled on week after week for the purpose of finding how a certain river started on its course. They had been misled by vicious or ignorant guides and cajoled by lying natives. They had been robbed by their own porters and fleeced by every chief through whose territory they had passed. Their party had been reduced by death and desertion. They had experienced endless delays and every woe that could attend such miscellaneous troubles as mutiny, loss of kit, treachery and the onslaughts of wild beasts. Yet for well-nigh seven months these two men kept on, bearing each a dead burden of wretchedness, and yet saved from falling by nothing more than a desire to learn a fact

in the geography of an alien country. Had they been in search of the River of Life they could not have endured more sufferings, have overcome more difficulties, nor have been inspired by a more fervent hope.

By the time Tanganyika was reached Burton was gravely ill, while Speke, weakened by continuous fever, was afflicted with an inflammation of the eyes which produced 'almost total blindness.' It is lamentable to think that after this purgatorial march Speke was unable to view the great inland sea with which his name will ever be associated. As he says in his book,[1] 'the lake could be seen in all its glory by everybody but myself.'

Undeterred by their abject plight, these two men, who should have been in bed in a hospital ward, actually, in March 1858, attempted to make an exploration of Tanganyika in a boat. It was at this time that another misfortune befell Speke. A small beetle crawled into his ear and soon reached the bottom of the passage. Having gone so far the animal appears to have been annoyed at encountering such an obstacle as the petrous bone. 'This impediment evidently enraged him,' writes Speke, 'for he began with exceeding vigour, like a rabbit at a hole, to dig violently away at my tympanum.' It was in the explorer's mind to tempt the beetle to withdraw by offering to it tobacco, oil, or salt, but unfortunately none of these luxuries were at hand. Speke then introduced some melted butter into his ear, but this delicacy did not afford to the beetle a sufficient inducement either to come out or to cease digging. As

[1] *What led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, London, 1864.

BLUFF FROM WHICH SPEKE FIRST SAW THE VICTORIA NYANZA.

COAST OF THE MUANZA ESTUARY.

the animal evidently was convinced that by persistent clawing he would find a way out through the cranium on the other side, Speke resolved to discourage him by applying the point of a penknife to his back. The application did as a matter of fact divert the insect's attention and finally quieted him, but unfortunately the knife at the same time so wounded Speke's ear that severe suppuration took place. The glands in the side of the neck became swollen and broke down into as many abscesses. 'It was the most painful thing,' adds the author, 'that I ever remember to have endured. For many months the tumour made me almost deaf, and ate a hole between the ear and the nose, so that when I blew it my ear whistled so audibly that those who heard it laughed.' After many months the obstinate beetle came away, but piece by piece, as befitted his unconciliatory character during life.

The two sick men returned eastwards to a place called Kaze, where they camped about the end of June. Captain Burton was now so ill that he had to be left there. On July 9, 1858, Speke started from Kaze alone, determined to march due north until he came upon the great lake of which he had heard so much from the natives, and which he was convinced would prove to be the source of the Nile. He reached the Muanza creek and followed its eastern border for three days. Then, early on the morning of August 3, he climbed the last hill and from the top saw at his feet, stretching away to the horizon, the 'pale blue waters' of the mighty lake. That was one of the moments in History.

It is evident that the point from which Speke obtained

the first view of the lake was the high ground on the eastern side of the mouth of the Muanza creek now known as 'The Bluff'; for he says that the western horn of Ukerewe cut off the view of the lake to the eastward of north, and this is about the bearing of the island from the height named. Moreover he adds, 'Below me, at no great distance, was the *débouchure* of the creek which enters the lake from the south, and along the banks of which my last three days' journey had led me.'

Speke was much impressed by the beauty of the scene; 'but,' he remarks, 'the pleasure of the mere view vanished in the presence of those more intense and exciting emotions which are called up by the consideration of the commercial and geographical importance of the prospect before me.' On this same day he reached Muanza, which he described as placed in 'a happy, secluded-looking corner.'

He had now to deal with the great personage of Muanza, the Sultan Mahaya. This monarch was a man of gigantic proportions who appeared to be about fifty years of age. His arms and legs were covered with brass and copper rings and with white porcelain beads like pieces of tobacco pipe. He wore ivory circlets above his elbows and on his wrists bangles made of the fibre of an aloetic plant. About his forehead were fastened two small goat or deer horns, while round his neck hung strings of coarse blue beads. His hair was a mat of tightly curled up ringlets and his countenance is described as being both benign and square.

Speke did not make quite so imposing a figure. He

was ragged, travel-stained, and unshaven. His face, tanned brown by the sun, showed still, no doubt, the ravages wrought by a host of biting insects. He describes his costume as made up of a 'flannel shirt, long togs and a wideawake.' The 'wideawake' is the soft felt hat of about 1850, a 'long tog' is described in Tuft's 'Glossary of Thieves' Jargon' as a coat, but the term probably refers to trousers or what may have remained of the same. In addition to this he wore—in order to protect his eyes—'French grey spectacles.' In this uncourtly attire Speke met the king of the square countenance. It was a memorable meeting, a meeting of the period B.C. with the period A.D. Had the Sultan Mahaya any notion at the time of what this audience would lead to, he assuredly would never have granted it.

The result of the interview, however, was not satisfactory. The king was offended at the manner in which Speke had conducted himself. The white man, ignorant of the etiquette of a neolithic court, had undoubtedly been guilty of some breach of ceremony, for there is no evidence that the monarch took exception to either the wideawake or the long togs as unsuitable for a royal reception. The outcome of the matter was this—the king declined to give Speke any food. When an outraged sovereign is at the same time the only meat contractor in the district the position is serious. Speke had resort to such diplomacy as he thought would influence a neolithic mind. He sent the sultan a present 'consisting of one barsati, one dhoti merikani, and one gora kiniki.' What these words represent I have no idea; but the punctilious sovereign was so pleased

with them that he gave Speke a bullock. Thus ended what no doubt the best people in Muanza long spoke of as a regrettable incident.

Speke was only able on this occasion to remain a few days at the lake. He reached Kaze again on August 25. The cost of his journey from Kaze to Muanza and back was £39 3*s*. 4*d*. There being no currency, he needed to take with him a great deal of cloth of various kinds, 70 lbs. of white beads and three loads of rice. Indeed, those who travelled in Africa in these times required half a dozen men to carry their money alone. Many of the natives about Muanza wear white beads, and it may be safe to surmise that some of these were derived from Speke's collection of 70 lbs.

THE SQUARE, MUANZA.

MARKET PLACE, MUANZA.

CHAPTER XXV

MUANZA

MUANZA lies some distance down the estuary, on a little green bay of its own. The sides of the creek are formed of precipitous cliffs, covered closely with trees from base to summit, with here and there an outcrop of grey rocks which may assume the outline of a bastion in one place or of a watch-tower in another. Occasionally there is a clearing among the trees occupied by a smooth slope of grass. The beach at the foot of the cliff is a beach of pearl-coloured stones which form a bright, broken line between the blue of the water and the heavy green of the bush.

As Muanza is approached the cliffs fall away on either side and there appears a wide gorge which, descending from the distant hills, opens out upon the margin of the lake. On a level plain at the mouth of this ravine stands Muanza. The beach has many moods: it is now a strip of yellow sand and now a lawn of lettuce green or a thicket of rushes. By the water's edge is an avenue of palms, as well as some grim monumental-looking piles of granite. Beyond the beach among innumerable trees are a few bright houses, but the town itself is

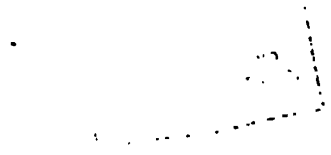
not to be seen from the lake. From out of the trees arise certain enormous cairns of rock together with a low hill, upon the summit of which is a fort with two towers. Behind all is a solemn valley which winds mysteriously inland through the tree-covered downs until it is lost in a bay amidst the purple hills.

The town itself is the largest on the lake. It is well laid out, is possessed of many excellent streets, and above all of an infinite variety of trees. It is a particularly clean and orderly town, to which a German atmosphere is given by an inordinate display of empty beer bottles and by a number of native soldiers in smart khaki uniforms. There are apparently as many East Indian traders here as in a town of corresponding size in the British Protectorate.

In the centre of Muanza is a square, very dusty and hot, but saved from being a blazing desert by an enormous tree with leaves of the deepest and most gratifying green. On one side of the square is the white-walled boma, while on the other is the market-place, which is undoubtedly the most picturesque feature of Muanza. The latter building is made up of a colonnade of white pillars which serve to support an immense roof of thatch. It possesses no walls, being open to the breeze on all sides, an arrangement of some merit, for Muanza is warm. This place of primitive trade is marvellous in the display of colour it affords. The grey thatch against the blue sky, the white columns, the deep shadows, the fringe of forest trees and palms, and the ochre-tinted earth make the sober background of the picture. In the foreground hundreds of brown-skinned natives, mostly naked to the

A STREET IN MUANZA.

A STREET IN MUANZA.



waist, are busy with their bartering or are squatting on the earth before piles of yellow-green bananas, little pyramids of mealies, trays of meat in balls, or baskets filled with the gaudy fruits and vegetables of the tropics. On the outskirts of the market are parcels of firewood, spread out on the ground, serving to show that wood of a kind is scarce. The brighter touches of colour in the scene are provided by many a white robe or scarlet tarboosh, by many a skirt radiant with stripes or spots or ablaze with a pattern so large that it would be 'loud' even in Brobdingnag.

The natives, who are stated to be of the Wasukuma tribe, are an agreeable-looking people, intelligent and dignified. Their chief weakness appears to be a passion for hairdressing. In any native street there is sure to be seen at least one gratified woman crouching on the ground with a friend kneeling behind her 'doing' her hair. Some have their hair clipped into strange patterns which would excite the envy of the most imaginative poodle barber in Paris, while others worry the wool into a kind of startled mop which accords with the popular conception of the state of the hair in acute mania. The native huts are of good type, some being square with mud and wattle walls, while others are round. All possess the exquisite grey thatch, and few are far away from the shade of trees. Many of the European houses are charming and of no mean pretensions.

Muanza has little to boast of in the matter of health. Its chief trouble is from malaria, for probably on no part of the lake are the mosquitoes more numerous or persisting. The steamer remained in Muanza three days,

lying by the side of the pier, a stay sufficiently long to test the reputation of the local fly. The temperature at noon on deck was 82° F., but the moisture in the air made this moderate heat oppressive.

One day at Muanza was devoted to an exploration by steam launch of the estuary south of the town. It is a beautiful track of winding water, a blue fiord among low green hills, a silent tideless river with many a bold headland and many a secluded cove. There are numerous islands in the estuary of pearl-grey rock, buried under a tangle of tropical vegetation and alive with birds of strange and brilliant plumage. Certain of these islands are the haunts of crocodiles, hoary reptiles that lie basking in the sun on any sloping shelf by the water's edge, each with a hideous smile on its villainous face as if it gloated over some murderous dream.

One of these malignant brutes, that until it moved looked like a mass of weather-worn rock, was not less than twelve feet in length. The war waged against the crocodile has not as yet produced much effect, even in the neighbourhood of Muanza, where a reward of a rupee (1*s.* 4*d.*) is offered for every hundred of its innocent looking eggs. In spite of the crocodile's hypocritical leer, Sir Harry Johnston thinks that he ' has probably no more real humour in him than a sea-anemone,' and compares his expression to ' the foolish smile which might pass over the face of a sleeping drunkard.'

THE MUANZA ESTUARY.

THE MUANZA ESTUARY.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WEST COAST OF THE LAKE

FROM Muanza the course of the steamer was across the open lake to the west coast. It was a long passage, for we started from the German port at 5 A.M. and did not reach Bukoba, our destination, until three in the afternoon. For a considerable part of the journey we were out of sight of land. There is an impression, encouraged by poets, that a lake is always as smooth as a mirror so that neighbouring heights can be reflected upon its unruffled surface. The Victoria Nyanza is not of this type. It is no lover of abiding peace. It can be and is very violent on occasion, for its temper is uncertain, and an ugly sea with huge foam-crested waves takes very little time to develop when the wind is so minded. It is a fine thing for a roving wind to swoop down from the snowclad mountains and to find a warm stretch of water to run wild over. It is no mere pool upon which a mischievous breeze can raise nothing more serious than a shudder. It is a sea with an expanse of 27,000 square miles, whose waters can be lashed into demoniacal fury, whose waves can roar and hiss and batter with the best, and whose combers, rolling

in upon a lee shore, can break with a thunder worthy of the Atlantic. The Nyanza is a wild place in a gale of wind and a desolate one when the whole world is shut out, as with a veil, by torrents of tropical rain.

On the passage to Bukoba we were accompanied at first by what would be called a fair sea, but before the day was over the 'fiddles' were on the dining-table, the masts and funnel of the boat were rolling to and fro like so many metronomes, the spray made a blizzard on the foredeck, while below were to be heard those creakings of bulkheads, rattling of crockery and bumping of loose luggage which are signs that the sea is troubled.

The first land sighted to the west was the island of Bukerebe, a long low torpedo-shaped island, smooth and grey, with a crest of deep-green trees on its summit. It would be well called, in the words of Kipling, 'a whale-backed down,' for it had a curious resemblance to some sleek monster asleep on the lake, especially as the crowning line of trees was very like a dorsal fin.

The west coast of the lake near Bukoba is very different from that of the east, being formed by long undulating grass downs dotted here and there with trees or with dense woods that fill steep hollows or border open glades. If in England the sea crept up to the foot of the South Downs, the new coast thus brought into being would be like the western shore of the Victoria Nyanza.

At the base of one such down the German village of Bukoba is established. It is a pretty little settlement, upon the adornment of which great care has been bestowed. Behind a yellow beach there stretches a pale

MAIN STREET, BUKOBA.

WOMEN DANCING, BUKOBA.

green strand bounded on its land side by masses of trees, by banana groves, and by the white-walled, crimson-roofed houses of Bukoba. At the back of the village stands the olive-green down traversed by a mysterious red road which, having mounted to the crest of the hill, vanishes at the skyline.

This road is almost the first thing that attracts the attention when Bukoba is viewed from the lake. There may be some curiosity as to which house is the governor's, or as to where stand the boma and the market-place, but the greater interest centres upon this determined road. Where does it lead to, how far has it penetrated into the country, what is its destination? Much of the sentiment of a new country or of a lonely country gathers about its roads. The old road embodies the spirit of its past history, the new road of its future. The ancestry of many a people lies in the old road, the road made by the tramp of bare feet, by the hoofs of oxen and the pattering of sheep. On the other hand, the first real sign of the advance of civilisation in a savage land is not the fort or the tin house, but the road made with pickaxe and shovel.

The landing at Bukoba is by a crude pier which affords shelter for a few small boats. The town is exceedingly trim and clean and is generously planted with trees, many of which are arranged in avenues. There are the usual Government bungalows, the inevitable boma and the neat native soldier in khaki. The market-place is in a large square surrounded by hideous corrugated-iron buildings. Two shed-like thatched structures stand in the centre where the native trader

squats at the receipt of custom. They form but a poor imitation of the stately market-house of Muanza.

The native huts are large and well built, being made of mud and wattle walls covered by a grass roof. Each cluster is surrounded by an elaborately constructed fence of poles placed closely together. The country around Bukoba is singularly pretty, so that many claim the settlement to be more charming even than Muanza.

The native population is evidently composed of more than one tribe. The folk of the country are the Waheia. They are an uninteresting people of a low type who take life dully. They do not shave, so that Bukoba presents the unusual spectacle of black men with copious moustaches and whiskers. The men wear a ragged tunic of raphia palm fibre and the women a kilt of the same, the latter suggesting ballet girls' skirts hurriedly fashioned out of grass. Others are clad in bark cloth, which to be in the mode should be greasy and the colour of Thames mud.

While the stêamer was lying at Bukoba a native dance took place. The dancers were about fifty in number, and belonged, it is said, to a tribe from the interior. The display was given in the public square of the town—an open stretch of white sand—at one end of which the performers were huddled together in a dejected line. The music was provided by numerous large drums which might have been made out of some gigantic nut sawn in two. There were smaller drums of like shape, some of which were beaten by sticks, some by the hands. The wind instruments were horns which gave out weird and melancholy notes, or rather each horn gave out two notes, the same being repeated without

NATIVE DANCE, BUKOBA.

MARKET PLACE, BUKOBA.

end. Apart from the orchestra many of the performers carried calabashes filled with pebbles, which when shaken produced a noise as of hail on an iron roof.

The *ballerini* were mostly men, but with them were a certain number of ancient women who were either artistes of merit or objects of ridicule. It would be charitable to assume that they had been famous dancers in their youth who, on this special occasion, had been induced to return for the moment to the stage they had once graced. The people were clad generally in rags. Although many of the orchestra were naked to the waist, the majority were in white calico, which seemed to be equivalent to evening dress. The costume most in favour was made out of bark cloth well greased and generously toned down with red ochre or dirt. A very fashionable tint of bark cloth was a rust colour. This is probably now the rage in Bukoba, or, as the fashion papers would say, 'is now much worn.' A few of the troupe were either clad in leopards' skins or wore them suspended from the shoulder after the manner of an academic hood. Nearly all of the company carried spears or long sticks.

The dance was said to have been a war dance; if so it was concerned with a very dispiriting war. The display might equally as well have been a funeral dance or a wedding march or a village jig. It was a neolithic dance to neolithic music. The music was interesting in that it illustrated the evolution of tune out of mere noise, for there was enough rhythm in it to indicate some limited invention. As for the dance, it was a mere middle-aged romp. It might have been a dance in

honour of St. Vitus, for it was marked by contortions and convulsions not unlike those to be seen in any hospital for nervous affections. The six women of the party danced together, but they apparently made up the movements as they went on, so that the result was little more than an embodiment of feminine restlessness. One amazon who brandished two spear shafts carried with her, as an additional weapon, a green umbrella.

Just off Bukoba is the little island of Busira which, thanks to the kindness of Captain Bruce, I was able to visit. It possesses every feature that a romantic island could be supposed to exhibit. It has a shingly beach, a stretch of almost impenetrable jungle, sheer precipices on two sides, curious sea caves and a clear hill-top covered with long gold-green grass. Near the shore were two fishermen's huts. The fishermen were for the moment away, the sole inhabitant of the place being a boy whose entire dress was a piece of string and a small tassel of grass. This boy, if only he knew it, would be the envy of nearly every lad in Europe who had any leaning towards the life and times of Robinson Crusoe. About the hut was the complete outfit of an orthodox desert island, namely, cooking-pots, water-bowls, fishing-nets and traps, a patch of bananas, a small square of cultivated ground in which grew the mysterious vegetables favoured by castaways, and, most noteworthy of all, the goats without which no desert island is complete. On the summit of the hill was a little lookout in perfect keeping with the place, and a little path leading up to it. Nothing indeed had been omitted.

The island was literally alive with birds, with divers and ibis, with hawks and doves, with geese and golden aurioles. There were many beautiful flowers in the open ground beyond the wood, and innumerable butterflies. On the rocks near the mouths of the caves we came upon a company of otters.

A couple of English boys placed on this island for a month with a canoe, pistols, large pocket-knives, and, above all, a dark lantern would have the time of their lives. Their cup would be overflowing if they could be attended by a reformed cannibal of the name of Friday who could show them how to fish and lay traps.

We left Bukoba about sundown. As the night was light and the course clear it was possible to keep under steam until midnight. The passengers retired early, according to custom, but it was pleasant enough to lie awake in a berth near a porthole and look out upon the dim waters of the lake as they glided by. In a while the signal from the bridge 'stand by' could be heard in the engine-room, followed by the answering bell. Then came the order 'stop,' and the answer again rang out. The sound of rushing water by the ship's side ceased, the anchor dropped into the lake with a splash, while the chain rattled out from the hawse-pipe. The ship rolled to and fro as she slowly came up to the wind. Steps were to be heard on the hitherto noiseless deck, the hum of the dynamo died away and the lamps faded into darkness. The moon streamed in through the cabin window, and there fell upon the ship the deadest silence that can be met with in the world.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SLEEPING SICKNESS

On the morning after leaving Bukoba the steamer was off the coast of Uganda and therefore once more in British waters. The first view of Uganda from the lake is the same as the last sight of it, a spectacle of one vast unlimited forest, an expanse of trees and nothing but trees, since they extend to the horizon on the north, on the south, and on the west. The land is neither level nor undulating, but presents a surface broken by a thousand hills. Indeed, Uganda, as seen from the lake, is a country of wooded hills, a green and luxuriant looking country so densely covered by vegetation that one cannot imagine that it possesses either roads, pastures, or the habitations of men. The woods come down to the water's edge, or where they fall short of it is a stretch of bush, and then, possibly, a frayed fringe of rushes extending far into the lake. Here and there will be a sandy beach, but if the beach be wanting it is hard to tell where the land and the water meet.

The steamer followed this enchanting coast for many a mile, but yet, long as was the way, there was never to be seen a sign of human life. Inviting as seemed the

shore, one looked in vain for huts, for canoes, for fishermen. There was no delusion in this, for these banks of the lake, once busily populated, are now destitute of any traces of man. The passage northward is between the mainland and the group of the Sese islands. Sese forms the largest archipelago in the lake as well as, without doubt, the most beautiful. The islands are hilly and gloriously green, capped with smooth downs or hanging woods, and always gentle and English looking. They were once full of cheery folk, but now, like the mainland coast, they are deserted to a man. The huts are in ruins, the canoes have all been burnt, while there is not a soul to wander in these forests, to loiter in these shady coves, or to follow the chase across these pleasant uplands. The pitiable loneliness of the place is explained by the fact that we are now in the midst of the sleeping-sickness area. These are the islands of the Sleep of Death, the shores of Lethe, in whose drowsy shade the weariest will find forgetfulness of things. To the African this is the most fatal spot on the face of the earth, a place more fraught with death than a leper island, more poisonous to the negro than the vilest swamp or the most stagnant tropical lagoon. There is a sense of heartless cruelty in the knowledge that an island paradise so bright with seeming innocence and virginal beauty should be in reality a festering plague spot and a trap of Death.

This corner of the Victoria Nyanza has been, moreover, the scene of one of the most remarkable battles of modern days, a battle fought between a great scientific power on the one hand and a bluebottle on the other. Stranger still, the bluebottle has gained the victory.

It has been more than a victory, it has been a rout, since every man concerned in the conflict has fled, while the fly is left in undisturbed possession of the field. Such is the present state of the campaign against sleeping sickness. Those who have not died on the shores of the lake have been removed inland to places beyond the reach of the insect. Was there ever such an ignominious stampede? Yet it was either flight or death, for in that section alone of the coast which belongs to the kingdom of Uganda there have been no less than 20,000 deaths from sleeping sickness in the last five years. Although, for the moment, the bluebottle is the absolute monarch of the lake, the last has not yet been heard of the vanquished, it may therefore not be out of place to give some account of the forces engaged in this exceptional conflict.

Three factors are concerned in sleeping sickness: (1) the trypanosome, (2) the fly, and (3) the man. The story of the relationship between these three is as simple as the story of 'The House that Jack built.' The trypanosome is picked up by the fly. The fly bites the man, and in so doing introduces the trypanosome into the man's blood. The trypanosome multiplies in the man's body and produces the phenomenon of sleeping sickness. The man dies.

The three *dramatis personae* may be considered in detail.

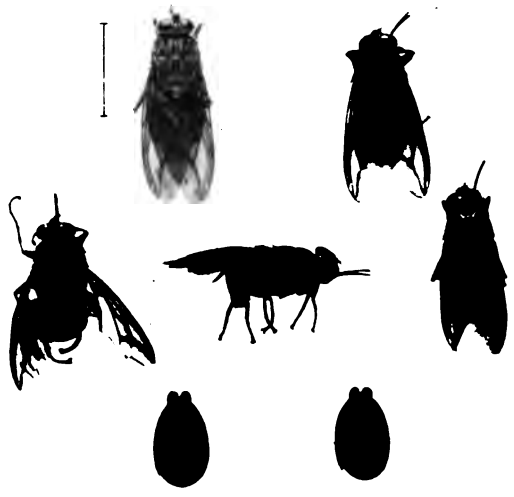
(1) The trypanosome is a protozoon. The Protozoa, or first animals, represent the simplest and lowest known forms of animal life. Each consists of a unit mass of living matter, a single cell complete in itself and capable of independent existence. These little bodies,

it is needless to say, are so exceedingly minute that they can only be seen by a microscope. It is curious that the most primitive form of animal should in this and in other instances attack the most elaborately developed and, moreover, kill him. The full name of the deadly parasite is the *Trypanosoma gambiense*, which may be interpreted into the English tongue as 'the auger-shaped creature of Gambia.' The fact that it was discovered in Gambia explains the latter part of its name. As to the rest of the title, the animalcule is composed of one elongated cell pointed at either end and so twisted as to resemble the end of an auger. One edge of the cell is prolonged into a kind of fin, by the undulatory movement of which the creature progresses. It multiplies by splitting longitudinally in such wise that one cell becomes two, and a single trypanosome in time a host. By what means 'the auger-shaped creature of Gambia' compasses the death of the man is not precisely known.

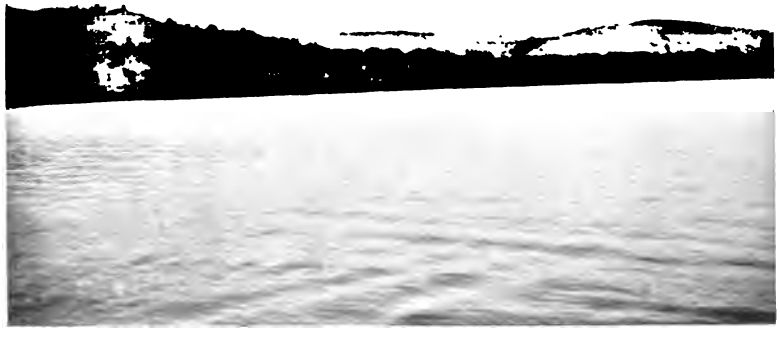
(2) The fly is a tsetse fly with the somewhat pretty name of *Glossina palpalis*. It is a two-winged insect, so very like the ordinary housefly in general aspect that the unexpert would be ready to believe that it had been captured in an English kitchen. One would suppose that a fly whose very touch may carry death would be terrible to look upon, would be slashed with lurid colours and bristling with some fearsome armament, but the glossina is so dull and so innocent looking as to almost escape notice. When it is at rest, with its wings modestly crossed, it is as demure as a nun with folded hands. One would imagine, too, that its approach would be

heralded by some heart-arresting sound, but there is merely a gentle buzzing in the air that suggests the bee-haunting summer and the meadow of flowers. It is a mocking sound according to some, for while the humming may cause the listener to turn to the right the fly may be floating on the left. As befits the Winged Messenger of Death, its flight is uncertain. It darts out of space and into space it vanishes again. Many who have watched for it have said that they could never see from whence it came nor whither it went.

In spite of its commonplace and insignificant appearance this insect has had bestowed upon it an astonishing attention. Its haunts, its tastes, its modes of life have been inquired into with as much keenness as a secret agent could ever show in the pursuit of a Lucretia Borgia. There is not one hour of its day that has not been accounted for, not one amatory passage that has escaped notice, not one trait of personal peculiarity that has not been carefully tabulated. The admirable bulletins of the Sleeping Sickness Bureau read like the records of the Inquisition. No detective's diary could be so full of detail as are the theses men of science have devoted to the habits and fancies of this wholesale poisoner. The enigmatical man of the times or the scandal-provoking Grand Duchess has never been followed by American reporters with the same determination to find out 'everything' that has been displayed by the inquirer into sleeping sickness. Conspicuous among the biographers of *Glossina palpalis* must be mentioned Dr. Aubrey Hodges, the principal medical officer of Uganda, who first drew attention to the limited distribution



TSETSE FLY (GLOSSINA PALPALIS), WITH TWO PUPÆ.
(The line shows the natural length of the fly.)



THE SHORE OF THE LAKE IN THE SLEEPING SICKNESS AREA.

and habitat of the fly. It would appear that this winged thing that carries with it the germ of Eternal Sleep lives solely on blood and spends its life seeking for blood, and especially for human blood. It will drink the blood of a monkey or of a rat, and when times are hard will condescend to taste of crocodile, but the diet it loves above all is the blood of a man. The bite is sharp yet possibly unnoticed, for it leaves no after-irritation of the skin. The capacity of the glossina for blood is wonderful. By weighing tsetse flies before and after their meals it has been found that the quantity of blood taken up by male flies is about 130 per cent. of their own weight, and in female flies about 200 per cent. of that weight. The larger appetite of the female is explained on the grounds that she has a family to provide for. If a woman of nine stones in weight had the dining powers of the female glossina, she would be able to consume 252 lb. of nourishment at one meal, while in nine meals she would eat over one ton of food. It has been noticed that the flies, when in captivity, need a meal of blood every forty-eight hours in order to keep them in health. It is no matter for wonder that the fly has been noticed to retire invariably to rest after a meal. There is one good point about *Glossina palpalis*, and only one: it feeds in the daytime, its regular hours being from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M.

It is a creature of tastes, this fly. It much prefers a black or a brown skin to a white. It has also so marked a leaning for dark cloths that one writer says, 'In my opinion white clothing affords the greatest degree of immunity from attacks of these insects.' It can bite

through a thin garment, such as a sock, but being a lazy animal prefers not to make the effort unless compelled. Its laziness leads it into mean ways. For example, it is very fond of hiding in boats under the thwarts. As soon as the passengers are seated it emerges and bites their legs. Thus it is that ladies are advised to avoid boats in this area of the lake unless their clothing has been amended. It is an insect of regular and serious habits. It gets up between 7 and 7.30 in the morning and retires at sundown. If it is a cloudy or depressing day it may, like a spoilt human being, not get up until 10 A.M. It hates rain and wind with the fervour of a daintily dressed woman, so whenever the wind blows it goes away and sulks until it is over. Fortunately, this abhorred insect has very conservative notions on the question of where to live. It haunts the edge of the lake in so homesick a fashion that the range of its flight does not in a general way extend beyond thirty yards from the water. It may follow a black man for a particular brand of blood for a much greater distance than this, but as soon as the drink craving is satisfied it will be back to the water's edge again. Thus it is that people who live some little way from the lake, and especially those who wear white clothing, have no need to trouble about sleeping sickness. The fly, moreover, must have the shelter of trees or low bush throughout its life, and as the ground about every landing-place is very carefully cleared of vegetation, the *Glossina palpalis* is not to be found on a lake steamer. The casual visitor, therefore, runs no more risk of sleeping sickness on the Victoria Nyanza than he does of bubonic plague on the upper Thames.

(3) The man. To spread the malady it is necessary that the fly should convey the infection from some individual already diseased to another individual who is susceptible. Now, sleeping sickness only appeared on the lake some few years ago, and, as the glossina is an old lake dweller, the *materies morbi* must have been introduced from elsewhere. It is known that for long the sickness existed in the Congo, so it is probable that some native of Uganda who had ventured thither fell ill and then, weak and drowsy, made his way home to the lake to die, bringing 'the auger-shaped creature of Gambia' with him. Or it may be that a slave from the western forest was dragged to the Victoria Nyanza, and that hidden in his blood lay the awful germ that was to cause the death of so many thousands. The trouble has spread a good deal since the early days, and has already travelled some 200 miles down the Nile.

The disease is very slow but very determined in its progress. It begins by a vague sense of illness that may be ascribed to malaria or typhoid or to some other enfeebling malady of the tropics. There is an irregular fever followed in a while by increasing debility, emaciation, and anæmia, together with the appearance of enlarged glands, mostly in the neck. Lastly, there settles upon the wearied wretch a deepening lethargy. He may fall asleep as he eats or speaks. The day through he is drowsy and dull, muddled and stupid, like a drugged man, while whether he sleeps or wakes there is ever about his sunken face the look of unutterable misery. The drowsiness is due to poison in the brain, while the sleep is a nightmare of woe, the half-conscious slumber

of a man who is too tired to die. 'The auger-shaped creature of Gambia' does not make the fly ill, nor does it seem to upset the cast-iron health of the crocodile, but it kills the poor monkey, who dies of sleeping sickness in the same pitiable manner as the man.

In the matter of the mastering of this disease the problem is simple. There are three factors concerned, the trypanosome, the fly, and the man. With the removal of any one of these three the disorder vanishes. Unfortunately, it has not yet been found possible to get rid of either the animalcule or the insect, so it is the man who has to be removed. The lake shore and the islands of the Sese group have been cleared of human inhabitants. These amazed but docile natives have been taken inland with all their little prehistoric belongings to parts where the fly never penetrates. Their canoes—the picturesque fibre-sewn canoes—have been burnt, so that they can no longer get back to the islands that never cease to haunt their dreams. They cannot swim across the strait, for there is no coastguard so vigilant as the crocodile. Such persons as perforce live near the palpalis country are advised to go properly clad, to make their dwellings fly-proof, and to learn something of the haunts and habits of the desolating insect.

The fly itself has not been neglected. To kill a thousand of these modest-looking creatures is to win a crown of glory. The pupae, the cradles of the infant fly, are crushed under a delighted heel whenever found; the breeding places, the glossina nurseries, are broken up; the bush is cleared along the water's edge so that the fly can no longer find that shade without which it is unable

to live. It is a curious but appropriate fact that this poison-spreading insect dies when definitely exposed to the full light of the sun. As a result of these and other protective measures, initiated and carried out by Dr. Aubrey Hodges in 1906, the deaths from sleeping sickness in the kingdom of Uganda have been reduced from 8003 in 1905 to 975 in 1909.

The attempts upon the life of 'the auger-shaped creature of Gambia' have been very numerous and persistent. It has been a case of a poisoner by instinct matched against a poisoner by art. So far the trypanosome has, with the aid of the fly, experienced no difficulty in poisoning the man to death, while the man, with the aid of the whole science of chemistry and pharmacology, has met with little success in his efforts to poison the trypanosome. So long as the two creatures, the thing like an auger and the dun-fly, hold together the deathly partnership, the conspiracy to slay will exist and the life of the man will be shadowed. The end of this hideous duel will no doubt be well, for it must result in the survival of the fittest. Up to the present the use of a certain preparation of arsenic, known as atoxyl, has led to what are called 'encouraging results.' When injected into the victims of sleeping sickness it brings about the death of a certain number of trypanosomes. The parasites in many cases entirely disappear, but, unfortunately, it cannot be said that that disappearance is to be relied upon as final.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CAPITAL OF UGANDA

ENTEBBE is the administrative capital of Uganda. It is as unlike a capital as any place can well be, while as for administration it must be of that kind which is associated with a deck-chair, a shady verandah, the chink of ice in a glass, and the curling smoke of a cigar. Entebbe, as being the prettiest and most charming town on the lake, would seem to be concerned more with her appearance than with the cares of state. There are Government buildings, no doubt, but they must be carefully disguised as bungalows and hidden away in gardens, for they are not in evidence. Government House is just a well-to-do seaside villa, with gables and balcony complete, so English that it may have been brought intact from the environs of Hastings. Its situation is superb, but it is too emphatically of the prosperous suburban type to suggest imperial authority. It is just such a house as the mayor of a provincial town would build for himself when he retired from business. Anywhere but here this villa would be called 'The Gables' or 'Lake View.' Entebbe, indeed, gives the impression of being a place of leisure, a summer lake resort where

BUSIRA ISLAND. [See page 192.

ENTEBBE FROM THE LAKE.

no more business is undertaken than is absolutely necessary.

The town spreads in a languid, careless way over a low down which slopes, in an equally easy fashion, to the lake. What houses there may be are more or less lost among the trees, for a great part of the slope is heavily wooded. There is so little to be seen of Entebbe from the lake that the golf links are more conspicuous than the capital. The Fort, a small cattle-pen-like enclosure occupied by corrugated-iron barracks, is prominent, and so also is the 'eligible villa' which is Government House.

Entebbe is even more attractive when seen close at hand than when viewed from afar. The harbour is a Watteau country harbour as little like a business harbour as the Hameau at Versailles is like a real village. It is a picnic-suggesting haven in the midst of a well-timbered park, the grass of which comes down to the water's edge. There is a little stone pier to make a breakwater and a wooden quay. Perched on a tree near the pier is a sea eagle. The air is alive with swallows, while fluttering over the water are some small black and white birds engaged in fishing. Reeds are growing far into the harbour, and serve to blend the deep green of the shore with the deep blue of the lake.

A brown road leads up from the harbour to the town, but it is a road through a tropical garden brilliant with colour and not a mere way from the quay. The town itself is very indefinite, for Entebbe is a city of bungalows. There are no squalid quarters and no swarming bazaar, so that the visitor is not made hot by the spectacle of

pushing business. About the main street itself, devoted as it is to affairs of trade, there is a spacious air of leisure. By some happy chance all roads seem to lead to the Club, a hospitable building which is the very heart of the place. The atmosphere of comfort and refinement about Entebbe is due in the main to its trimness and to the persisting impression that the town is in reality a garden with a few houses in it. Corrugated iron is by no means wanting in this city of trees, but it is quite overpowered by the luxuriance of the vegetation on all sides.

On reaching the high ground it is perceived that the capital of Uganda is placed on a peninsula and is nearly surrounded by the waters of the Victoria Nyanza. From every point there is a glimpse of the lake, which is most usually to be seen through a gap in the trees or through a palisade of palm trunks. The view from the height upon which Government House stands is unequalled for charm. It shows a wide arm of the sea, alive with islands, stretching inland to be lost among the tree-covered hills. It is a flood of blue water pouring eagerly into the great green forest. Its shores are marked by capes of palms, by creeks full of violet mist, and by gracious sand-rimmed bays of indescribable enchantment.

At Entebbe will be seen the church built by the White Fathers, a body of Catholic missionaries who wield a great influence in Uganda. The devotion of these self-sacrificing men to the victims of sleeping sickness when that disease was at its height is never likely to be forgotten by the native. The White Fathers have been of much service also in persuading the dwellers by

the lake to take advantage of the preventive measures introduced against this dire pestilence.

The vehicle of the country is the rickshaw. It is propelled by three men, one in front and two behind. It differs in no particular from the rickshaw of other parts of the east, and yet a journey in a Uganda rickshaw will leave behind a memory which will attach to no other vehicle of the kind. The thing memorable is neither the carriage nor the man, but the remarkable chant with which the rider is accompanied on the way. The leading man utters a breathless sentence; whereupon all three break out into a humming refrain. This is not a chorus, but rather an accompaniment; so that the recitative appears to be punctuated by the twang of three sonorous guitars. The spoken words vary, but the accompaniment is always the same. It is musical and alluring, as if it were a part of some archaic opera. This monotonous singsong is, I believe, free from poetic afflatus and deals rather with the person of the fare, his weight, his possible parentage, his social position and, above all, his potentialities in the matter of tips. It is as curious as if a bus driver and a bus conductor were to maintain throughout a journey along Regent Street one ever-repeated bar from some prehistoric *opéra bouffe*.

The average elevation of Uganda proper is about 4000 feet. The climate is mild and agreeable. It is never excessively hot nor unpleasantly cold, for the average maximum temperature is 78·4° F. and the minimum 62·8° F. The average rainfall at Entebbe, as estimated during a period of seven years, is 58·3 inches. The seasons are not well defined, but two dry

seasons in the year may be depended upon, one as a rule in June and July and the other from December to February.

Uganda at a height of 5000 feet may be regarded as healthy, but below that level the claim cannot be maintained. Indeed, Uganda is not a white man's country, that is to say, it is not a country where a European, with his way to make, can settle for life and hope to bring up a family. There are Europeans, especially among the White Fathers, who have been in continuous residence in Uganda for many years, but they do not lead the life of a settler nor are they exposed to all the risks with which he is beset.

The diseases which are most troublesome in the country are malaria, blackwater fever, and tick fever. With efficient prophylactic measures there is no doubt but that these maladies will become less frequent year by year, while their eradication is not impossible.

Although tick fever is rarely fatal it is a most unpleasant disorder, both in the violence of its onset and in the irritating way in which a relapse occurs just when the patient thinks the attack has passed off. It is due to the house tick, a peculiarly disgusting crab-like insect of minute size. It lives among the dry dust which is plentiful in houses with mud floors, or in crannies in the walls or in the thatch of the roof. From these hiding places it creeps out at night in search of human blood.

As in the case of sleeping sickness, it is not the mere bite of the insect that occasions the disease, but the circumstance that in its biting it introduces a parasite

ENTEBBE.

ENTEBBE.

into the body of its victim. This parasite being of the very humblest size has the great high-sounding name of the *Spirochæta duttoni*, which name, when reduced to common speech, becomes 'Dutton's curl of hair.' Dr. Dutton was one who earned glory by his investigations into the tick fever of the Congo Free State: the 'curling lock of hair' is the product of some poetic bacteriologist based on the fact that this wretched parasite appears in the form of a spiral thread. A less lyrical man of science would probably have called it the devil's screw.

There is one vile thing about this revolting insect, it can transmit the power of infection to its nasty progeny. The house ticks, therefore, belong to a family of hereditary bravos who hand down the gift of evil-doing as if it were an heirloom, and make the spreading of disease a family business. One thing the tick cannot do, he cannot climb up a smooth vertical surface; so the man in an iron bedstead is safe, especially if he carries his bedding in a tin box and takes care that the crab-like bug shall not drop upon him from the roof while he sleeps.

To acquire tick fever it would be necessary to sleep in a native hut or in a house built upon native lines. In the bungalow with brick walls, a cement floor, and a corrugated iron roof the tick can find no rest for the soles of his eight horrid feet. In a country like this, where insects are kings, it will not be surprising to hear that to rid a native-built house of ticks it is advised that the structure 'should be pulled down and burned.' This measure would appeal to the man in the proverb who 'burned his house to warm his hands.'

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CITY OF SEVEN HILLS

THE native capital of Uganda is a place called Kampala or Mengo according to taste. The distance from Entebbe to Kampala is twenty-three miles, which distance is traversed by a wide cinnamon-brown road with as good a surface as a highway in England. The Kampala road passes through a singularly beautiful country, and for many a mile out of Entebbe and from any rising ground there will be a glimpse of the lake. The road makes its way through dense belts of jungle, through shady woods, across open down-like country and through immense stretches of elephant grass. This grass will be seven or eight feet high, and when the wind passes over it it is like a tumbled sea. The road that cleaves it may be compared to that pass across the Red Sea traversed by the Israelites when 'the waters were as a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.' On either side of the road in all its three-and-twenty miles is a double line of trees—one row of cotton and one row of rubber.

The journey between the two capitals is made in a motor, a public conveyance bearing the inscription

'Government of Uganda.' There is nothing anomalous in this. Although a man but little over middle age can well remember when human sacrifices were common in the country, although it is only twenty-five years ago that Bishop Hannington was murdered, yet the motor is quite in keeping with the amended attitude of the people. Indeed, the only reason that the vehicle is what it is depends upon the fact that the aeroplane is still imperfect.

It is an interesting motor ride, for there is a great deal to see by the way. Many hamlets of thatched huts are passed, made evident by the banana plantations which surround them. Rickshaws are met with jogging into Entebbe with the springiness of grasshoppers; also ox carts crawling along as if the animals were walking in their sleep. There are many natives also, some in the fashionable, long, white cotton robe and some in togas of orange-brown bark cloth. The inhabitant of Uganda has no intention of being ridden over by a motor-car. When he sees the vehicle approaching he is not content with stepping aside, but is only satisfied as to his safety when he is well within the wood or is half hidden by the elephant grass. He is much too polite to resent the obtrusiveness of the motor, and there would be no expression in his language equivalent to the term 'road hog.' The charming Uganda lady will smile amiably at the car as it goes by, but when it has passed and she is not likely to be seen, she will hold her wide nose, but in so gracious a manner that it is almost a compliment.

Kampala *alias* Mengo is a place that one does not

definitely arrive at, nor on the return journey is it ever possible to say when one has left it. The capital is much too vague to allow at any moment of the announcement that the traveller has got there. There is no city, the place being composed exclusively of suburbs. Stranger still, each suburb is placed on a separate hill. It is as if London were to find itself represented by Sydenham Hill, Primrose Hill, Highgate, Richmond Hill, Muswell Hill, Putney Hill, and possibly a piece of Peckham Rye, the intermediate parts of the metropolis being occupied by banana fields and jungle.

Kampala is a place of seven hills, hills steep and distinct as isolated pyramids, so that to go from the top of one to the top of another is no mean task. Mengo is the hill occupied by the king. Kampala is the business quarter. Rubaga is the hill of the White Fathers. Nsambya is devoted to the St. Joseph's Mission. Namirembe is the Church Missionary Society's hill and Nakasero the Government officials' mountain, while Lugard's Fort has a hillock to itself. In this seven-hilled capital are some 77,000 inhabitants.

On nearing Kampala it is merely to be noticed that the road is leading to a place of hills, that the jungle is becoming less wild, and that the elephant grass is being replaced by groves of bananas. The hillsides are intensely green and are marked here and there by the brown roof of a hut or the white wall of a bungalow. Crowning the summit of one hill are the extensive and orderly buildings of the White Fathers' Mission, while on the top of another height is the great thatched roof of the English cathedral with its three straw-coloured

PRINCIPAL STREET, ENTEBBE.

steeples. There are good red roads in this Rome of the Jungle. They lead from hill to hill by way of shaded valleys. Life in Kampala is spent in toiling up a steep or in ambling down an incline. To pay a visit in this city is to descend from the summit of the Pyramid of Cheops and then climb to the apex of the Pyramid of Chephren.

That Kampala is a most picturesque place may be surmised. The only unsightly spot in it is the Indian bazaar, a medley of tin sheds, neither better nor worse than those of other Indian bazaars in the country, but utterly out of keeping with the dignity and charm of Uganda. The climate is very pleasant, more agreeable even than that of Entebbe, while the mosquito is less troublesome here than by the lake side.

So far as I am aware, one of the most ancient buildings in Kampala, as well as its only historical monument, is Lugard's Fort. It was built by Captain Lugard in 1891. It remains as a record of a sordid and disgraceful war into the tedious history of which it is not necessary to enter. Suffice it to say that Protestant missionaries arrived in Uganda in 1877 and Catholic missionaries in 1879. The introduction of Christianity into the country was attended not by the blossoming of brotherly love, but by the rapid growth of envy, hatred, and malice and all uncharitableness. A civil war broke out between the Protestants on the one hand and the Catholics on the other, whereby for a time the number of converts killed exceeded those that were made. Lugard, when he reached the country, found 'that the two Christian factions were animated by the most deadly hatred of

each other.'[1] He would also appear to have found that Christian teaching had not penetrated to any great depth, for he gives it as his opinion that the natives of Uganda were 'the greatest liars of any nation or tribe he had met or heard of.'

The fort is on a bare hill and is merely a deserted enclosure surrounded by a ditch and a picturesque wall crenellated like the old city wall at Mombasa. Both rampart and moat have an appearance of great antiquity, although the works are not yet twenty years old. Within the fort are still some of the buildings erected by Captain Lugard for the white men of his garrison.

Mengo is the king's hill, the hill of the palace. The king's residence is surrounded by a remarkable fence which is very regal both in its height and its extent. Inside there is a spacious enclosure, shut in by a wall of plaited reeds, trim and bright. This enclosure leads to another with a like palisade, the second leads to a third, and the third to a fourth. A keen anticipation is aroused that the next square must contain the kingly abode. The arrangement is that of the Chinese toy in which interminable boxes are contained, one within the other, and every box reached is assumed to be the last. It is evident that The Presence is jealously guarded and is not to be too readily approached. It is evident also that expectation has some ceremonial worth even in Africa, and that these enclosures of plaited reeds take the place of the long pillared hall and of the flight of steep steps which have played a like part in the more civilised world.

[1] *The Rise of our East African Empire*, by Captain Lugard, London, 1893, vol. ii.

LUGARD'S FORT, KAMPALA.

INTERIOR OF LUGARD'S FORT.

In each square is a large and elaborately constructed hut. This is the native house of Uganda and is worthy of some notice, for it is a structure of considerable charm. The house is round and appears to stand upon a platform of dried mud. The conical or beehive roof is covered with a very thick thatch of long fine grass. The roof, in the front of the house, is prolonged so as to form a porch or verandah supported by pillars made of palm trunks. At the sides of the hut the thatch reaches to the ground. The front of the structure has been aptly compared in effect to the old 'coal scuttle bonnet' of Victorian times. The entrance is lofty, the doorposts being made of wooden poles encased in a reed covering. The interior of the house and the outer walls of the porch and verandah are neatly covered with 'cane work,' that is to say, with long vertical stalks of elephant grass massed together and bound by transverse bands of bast (see fig.). This work is a speciality of Uganda and is very ornamental. Inside the hut the roof is held up by pillars made from the trunk of the wild-date palm.

The houses in the various enclosures at Mengo are occupied, it may be assumed, by court officials. One hut may belong to the Lord Chamberlain and another to the Keeper of the Privy Purse or to the Marshal of the Ceremonies. In certain of them were a number of people all displaying that attitude of studied leisure which is only to be seen in the precincts of an Eastern court. From the number of drums in view in one of the huts I gather that it belonged to the Master of the King's Music. Other houses appeared to be occupied by the Yeomen of the Guard, by the Royal Company

of Archers, or by the equivalent of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms.

In due course and when expectancy has reached its limit, the last court is entered, and here is indeed an anticlimax. One would expect that the Royal Palace would be a glorified Uganda house, with its verandah, its pillars of wild-date palm, and its exquisite cane work. In its place is a mean structure, plain to the uttermost, with white-washed walls and a corrugated-iron roof. This abode of kings is needlessly austere and is too ruthlessly stripped of every suggestion of human interest. One looks in vain for the creeper on the wall, for the deck chair in the porch, for the tobacco-pouch and pipe or other human relic on the window-ledge. The house seems to have stoically repressed any sign that marks the haunts of men, for it is lacking in personality as a powder magazine or a pumping station. Within can be seen pitiable European furniture, set out with an air of rigid aloofness, each article at the same time looking as homeless as if it were in an auction room. Possibly this transition stage from the dignified Uganda house to the orthodox European residence is unavoidable, but it is an unlovely period, and it leaves an impression on the mind that the king, whose praises are in the mouths of all, is the only one in Mengo who is unfitly housed.

On the summit of the hill of Namirembe is the English cathedral. It is an immense building with a steep thatched roof of a bright grey colour. This roof is broken up into three great cone-shaped steeples which represent the dome of the Uganda house. The walls

KING'S HOUSE, MENGO.

HOUSE IN THE KING'S COMPOUND, MENGO.

of the church are of sun-dried brick of a most agreeable salmon-brown tint. The windows, free of glass, are lancet-shaped and tall. Within the church the thatch is supported by columns of the same sun-dried bricks. The inside of the mighty roof and the under surface of its eaves are covered with that beautiful cane work which gives to the native hut its particular charm.

The whole building is most impressive and most dignified. It is impressive not only by its great size, but by its superb simplicity. It embodies, moreover, a fine conception, in that it adopts the features of the ancient native house to the construction of the church of a new religion. It is a building that must appeal to the native mind, because it presents in so sublime a manner the most familiar and characteristic features of the home of the people. The roof is the comfortable roof of thatch; the columns of brick replace the trunks of the palm tree; the delicate cane work is the one cherished peculiarity of the house of the country. There is only one jarring element in this unique place of worship. The windows behind the altar, instead of being open to the heavens like the rest, are filled with some pretentious stained glass, a feature which seems to be unworthy of a building of so much graciousness and nobility.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY

THE natives of Uganda—the Baganda, as they are called—have been the subjects of a copious literature which is appreciative and, for the most part, patronising. The Baganda are a remarkable and interesting people who have been 'taken up' by the white man with some intensity, who have been petted and made much of, and who have been cited as examples of the readiness with which European ideas and methods can be absorbed by the simple savage. The simplicity of the Baganda may not be so thorough as is assumed. Being a person of humour and intelligence he derives probably a good deal of private amusement from his instructor, whose enforced precepts he is much too polite to decline. He becomes a Catholic or a Protestant with the greatest readiness: he is glad to oblige anyone, and thus it is that the missionary gloats over him with ecstasy. It is only his own good sense that will save him from becoming silly, affected, and spoiled.

The native of Uganda is a Bantu negro of a fine type, a West African negro improved by ancient Hamitic intermixture. The Hamitic element in his ancestry has

been miraculously preserved and has led to the development of striking mental qualities in the present people. The Baganda would appear to have been practically cut off for long from the rest of the world. In this isolation, partly natural, partly imposed, they lived their own lives, worked out their own salvation, and developed their undoubted talents. Surrounded as they were by tribes which might well be called savage, they cultivated arts and industries of no minor order, and elaborated a courtliness and politeness of manner in their daily life which is no longer known in the more civilised world. They make excellent pottery of artistic design, are ingenious carpenters, are very proficient at basket making and at iron work, and are especially skilled as road makers. They are musical people, and it is interesting to note that the harp still in use is identical with that shown in ancient Egyptian mural paintings. In their isolation, in their long abhorrence of the stranger, in their artistic tastes, and in their elaborate politeness they closely resemble the Japanese, and, indeed, are happily described by Sir Harry Johnston as 'the Japanese of Central Africa.'

The first non-negro from the outer world to penetrate into Uganda was a specialised and complex product of civilisation in the form of an undischarged bankrupt fleeing from his creditors. He was a Baluch soldier from Zanzibar with a name that suggests the Tales of the Arabian Nights—Isan bin Hussein. He is supposed to have reached Uganda between 1849 and 1850.[1] The Baganda, being fond of anything new, received this

[1] *The Uganda Protectorate*, by Sir Harry Johnston, London, 1902.

rara avis, the bankrupt, with effusion and made much of him. So highly were his qualities prized that he became a person of influence in their midst and the possessor of three hundred wives.

Speke and Grant reached Uganda in 1862. Although they could not claim the distinction of being bankrupts, they were amiably received by King Mtesa, the grandfather of the present occupant of the throne. Thus it is that fifty years have not yet gone by since a white man was seen for the first time in this exclusive country.

The King Mtesa who entertained Speke and Grant was an astonishing ruffian, with almost every quality that is vile, including a positive passion for the shedding of human blood. No court function was complete unless a number of harmless folk were either hacked to pieces, burned to death, or mutilated for life. Wholesale murder was in those days the outward and visible sign of the kingly power and an item in the constitution.

When Mtesa died his son Mwanga came to the throne, and maintained the traditions of the royal house of Uganda with even more pious care. Such was his delight in butchery and horrors of all kinds that he might well have been the subject of a demoniacal possession. He made a speciality of manslaughter, while murder in its various forms seems to have been the only relaxation that he allowed himself from the cares of state. He must have acquired an intimate knowledge of the phenomena of death and a familiarity with every expression of terror, fear, and agony that the human face is capable of. Whenever he felt a little bored he could say with Hamlet :

Now could I drink hot blood
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on.

Indeed, many a sunny flower-scented day witnessed this bitter business among the pleasant hills where the sovereign dwelt. 'Memorials of this unhappy period,' writes Mr. Hattersley, 'are not wanting in Uganda even to this day in the number of men and women to be seen minus ears, eyes, lips, or hands—mutilated by order of the king or his chiefs.' [1]

It may be wondered how it was that a people so kindly, so courteous, so polished as are the Baganda could have tolerated a monarch of this brutish type. It must be explained by the belief that the Baganda in their pride would have no king who was not kingly. Their conception of regal power in the highest seems to have been based upon the completeness of the sovereign's control over the lives of his subjects. It is a child-like idea of a monarch, for it may be remembered that the Queen of Hearts in Alice's Wonderland 'had only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small,' namely by the order, 'Off with his head.'

Unlike other neighbouring tribes the Baganda are in complexion very black. They exhibit the woolly hair, the thick lips, and the broad flat nose of the negro. The men are tall, clumsily built, and undoubtedly ugly. They have, however, an expression so agreeable and so intelligent that any criticism of their features is forgotten. They are described as manly and amiable, as polite but never cringing, as enterprising and possessed of the

[1] *The Baganda at Home*, London, 1908, p. 4.

keenest interest in everything around them. An officer told me that when he went down to the coast he took his 'boy' with him. The lad had heard about the sea and that it was like the great lake but salt. On arriving at Mombasa the first care of the Uganda lad was to walk down to the beach to taste the water and test the truth of the statement that it was salt.

The women are singularly engaging. Although not beautiful according to a European standard their smiling faces are most fascinating. Unlike the women folk of the Masai or Kykuyu, they are pre-eminently feminine, amiable looking and coquettish. They neither tattoo their skins nor deform their bodies, as do so many of the natives of this part of Africa. They wear a skirt made of bark cloth, a reddish-brown filmy material obtained from a species of fig tree. Their well-moulded shoulders are bare and much to be admired. Civilisation is serving these pleasant and stately creatures very ill, for it is inducing them to adopt European attire with lamentable results. A Baganda woman in a Manchester made dress of boisterous colours, with a pair of police boots on her feet, and a velvet smoking-cap on her head, is so grotesque an object that she must feel the indignity to which she has subjected herself. Even the author of 'Sartor Resartus' would hardly credit how utterly a number of the most winning qualities could be destroyed by a little ill-arranged calico.

The men, for the most part, wear long white robes which reach from the neck to the feet, and on their heads either a white turban or a white embroidered cap of delicate workmanship. These garments are always

spotlessly clean and give to a company of Baganda men an aspect of great picturesqueness. One of these white-robed figures standing in the dark avenue of a wood or against a background of elephant grass makes an impressive figure, as if he were a priest of the forest; but when he has donned a bowler hat and a second-hand Norfolk jacket he sinks at once to the level of the lowest element in the crowd at a football match.

The assimilative power of the Baganda and their adaptability are wonderful. They have embraced the civilisation of the West with the same readiness and ease as the inhabitants of Japan. By the side of the harp which dates from unknown centuries will be the gramophone. The shield and the spear may be stacked in a corner with a modern rifle and a hunting knife of Sheffield steel. Here in the road is a native riding a bicycle of the latest pattern, while on his feet are the ox-hide sandals of bygone days. The man who was conspicuous as a performer in some barbaric war dance is now probably as conspicuous as an exponent of the typewriter; while the game tracker who knew of the mysteries of the forest and could read the ground as a book is now equally well versed in telegram forms and pawntickets, and can possibly read a message sent by the heliograph as easily as he could decipher the trail of a wounded buck.

It will be interesting to watch how these excellent people develop, and how they stand the sudden transition from the age of iron to the age of electro-plate.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE

THE voyage along the northern part of the lake, from the port of Kampala to Port Florence by way of Jinja, is memorable, since the coast line and the host of outlying islands are particularly picturesque. The course is through the Damba and the Rosebery channels, which wind among scenery very reminiscent of England, though there is still the same dismal lack of any sign of human life. At last the steamer turns into the Napoleon Gulf. This gulf has been described as a place of enchantment, but it differs but little from the rest of that fine green country which limits the Victoria Nyanza on its northern side. There are the same grass downs and heavy woods and the same islands fringed with papyrus.

At the end of this gulf is Jinja, a rough settlement of some size, purely utilitarian and without the least ambition to be beautiful. It is probable that at a period not far distant Jinja will become an important centre, for, in the opinion of many, it will be the largest town on the lake. A railway is to spread inland from Jinja, and the same promises much. The little tin town which is going to be great is on one shore of a *cul-de-sac* of the

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.
The Nile (in the centre) is seen just leaving the Lake.

lake from which there is no apparent exit. It ends just as do fifty other creeks on this inland sea—at a barrier of low hills. It may be noticed, as the pier at Jinja is approached, that there is a current in the water of the lake, the phenomena as of a moving tide, for any weed or fragment of wood that flecks the surface is seen to be drifting towards the blind end of the creek. This is curious, for the lake is tideless and the shore of the inlet appears to be without a breach. It is curious, too, that a canoe on the other side of the creek seems to be drifting in the same direction as if drawn by a magnet, for of any sign of a way out there is none.

It is not until the traveller has landed and has walked to the very end of the estuary that the mystery is solved. It is a pleasant walk along the high-banked shore of the lake, with such objects of interest by the way as the spoor of hippopotami and many Kavirondo cranes. The extremity of the creek is comparatively narrow, and square as the end of a blind alley in a town. Even when the end of the *cul-de-sac* is near at hand there is no sign of any gap in the great green wall that bounds the lake. Then on a sudden, at the very extremity of the inlet and in the corner of it where the two shores meet at right angles, there comes into view a wild ravine, a breach in the embankment, through which the waters of the Victoria Nyanza are pouring out in a mighty stream.

The stream is the Nile. Here, then, at last is that particular spot on the earth which has been for centuries the subject of so much mystery, so much speculation, and so much ardent search—the source of the Nile.

The glen through which the river runs is green and prettily wooded, a glen in an undisturbed, untrodden forest, while the Nile sweeping through it at some speed is as smooth and gleaming as a blade of steel.

The river as it leaves the lake is said to be some 300 feet in width. The point of departure of the great stream is marked by a series of white rocks, sharp-pointed and tooth-like, which rise above the surface of the mere. From these white stones the mysterious river starts on its journey of four thousand miles to the Mediterranean. The homeward-bound steamer, on its way to the north, will pass that shore of Egypt where the sacred stream, sullied and wasted by its long pilgrimage, creeps wearily into the sea, but it seems as if the way thither was across half the face of the globe. By many astonishing ways this stream will pass before it gains the sea, by many solemn temples and by many ancient walls, for this is the river of the Pharaohs on whose banks stand the mighty columns of Karnak, the Great Pyramids and the town of Thebes.

There are many birds gathered about this mouth of the lake, as if the spot had some special attraction. There are cormorants and divers, fish eagles and egrets, as well as birds of minor degree whose business is in the great waters. Among them are many seagulls wheeling in the air with just the same tremulous cry that echoes from the white cliffs of the English Channel. So familiar are they that they might have come direct from the North Foreland. These adventurous birds are the real discoverers of the Nile, for it must be supposed that in centuries past they followed the river up from the sea

THE NILE ABOVE THE FALLS.

THE RIPON FALLS.

and made a home on the lake as the very first emigrants from the Mediterranean.

Some little way down the Nile from its point of origin in the lake a broken dam is drawn across the stream. It is made up partly by a spit of low land and partly by two sturdy islands of rock covered with bushes. The stream is thus broken into three parts, and through the three narrow gaps in the barrier the water rushes with terrific force. These are the Ripon Falls, first seen by Grant in 1860.

The fall most easily approached is that nearest to the Jinja bank. It is hardly a fall, for the drop is only thirty feet, but is rather a water chute, the 'lasher' of a Thames weir highly magnified. The water as it shoots through the cleft shows a smooth curved back as if it were a mass of polished ice. Below the falls is a tumbling pool of bewildering eddies, of white foam, of flying spray and of ever wet rocks. In this cauldron of roaring waters many otters can be seen and occasionally a leaping fish. Below the falls the Nile gathers itself into an all-commanding flood that, swinging along a savage and romantic ravine, is soon lost in the great forest that bounds the horizon.

The return journey from the lake to the sea is curiously dead and uninteresting, so uninteresting that the traveller finds more diversion from a six weeks' old London newspaper than he does in a view from the carriage window. Lake Naivasha is passed without a glance, the Great Rift Valley is unheeded, and Longonot is regarded as a bore. As to the Athi plains, the herds of zebra and the prowling savage, they are forgotten

in a perusal of the debates in the House of Commons. Keen expectations are replaced by languid memories, for the road that looks forward is brilliant with imagination, but the road that looks back is grey with stolid facts. It is never to be believed that the path that led to the unscaled mountain-top is the very same that trails down to its too familiar foot. The play is over, the pageant is broken up, and there is nothing now but to get home.

It is well to be on the steamer again and to find that her prow is pointing northwards. The equator is passed as if it were a common milestone, while the few who land at Aden go ashore merely to see the telegrams. Port Said is of no interest except as a place where letters may be expected, and the canal is as unexciting as a railway cutting. Probably the most notable moment on the voyage is when the sun-helmet, which has for so long borne literally the heat and burden of the day, is handed over to the steward with the hope that neither it nor any of its kind will be seen again for long. It is of some interest also to confirm the prophecy of the German stewardess who, whenever the heat was complained of, ventured to predict 'plenty cold in the Gulf of Sewage.' It was cold in the Gulf of Suez—comparatively cold—and the change was hailed with supreme satisfaction.

The homeward-bound company seem singularly different from those who travelled south in the Ship of Good Hope. Many are ill and can only lie listlessly about on the deck. A 'touch of fever' explains the absence of any familiar figure from the smoking-room, while one man will offer another a tabloid of quinine just

as he would offer him a particular brand of cigarette. This is the ship of Disillusions. There is very little Romance in it; the Promised Land has been seen, the wonder world has become familiar, the dream has changed to the tale that is told. The merchant adventurer and the prospector are busy adding up figures in note-books. They were doing the same on the journey out, but the figures have somehow dwindled and no longer tally with those fine totals they smiled over on the Ship of Good Hope.

The most gratifying figure among the northward bound is the young official going home on leave. He is as boisterous as a schoolboy or as a dog let out of a kennel. He is as a thirsty man hurrying towards a splashing pool. The programme which he has pondered and elaborated every week for the last three years is varied and exhaustive. For every hour of sixty days he will live. His mother dwells in a village and does not know by what ship he is returning, so he has constructed in a dozen different ways the exact details of his homecoming. Will the station-master recognise him, will the bus from the 'George' be at the station, and where will he come upon his mother? 'What shall he do when he first goes up to London? Why, have his hair cut, of course, and go to the Club. What ridiculous questions people ask.'

When the weather is cool enough he appears on deck in a tweed suit. The coat is of an obsolete pattern and of an almost forgotten cut. It is redolent of naphthalin and is so covered with creases that the cloth appears to be rippled like a pond in a wind. It has

been kept for three years in a tin box as a robe of honour, while the passage of time has been reckoned by the months and days that must elapse before the garment could be donned again. That time has now arrived. On his head is an amorphous hat, a relic from the tin box. About the brim of the hat are coiled some fishing flies of gracious memory. They have been taken out and dreamed over at times when the heat was overbearing and the office work unduly nauseous. They have been a means of refreshment at all times and the soothers of many troubles.

Everything is forgotten now that the northern seas are reached—the white drill tunic, the greasy helmet, the buzzing of quinine in the ears, the hum of mosquitoes, the swish of the punkah, the six months' old magazine used for killing flies. It is a superb relief to be rid at last of the everlasting soda-water bottle and the ever-damp handkerchief. It is more than a relief to have broken out of the Jail of Monotony and to have escaped from beneath the heavy furnace-hot hand of the sun, while to see the white cliffs of England emerge from the mist is to see the dawn of a new heaven and a new earth.

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THE END

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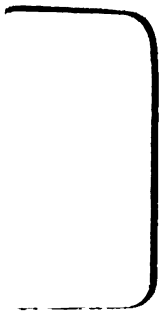

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